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A biographical inquiry into the occupational participation of men who drop out of school

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative interpretive biographical inquiry describes the nature of the occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school. School dropout was constructed as an occupational transition for the purposes of this study and the occupational participation of men who drop out of school was considered in relation to this. Study participants were selected using purposive, maximum variation sampling. Achieving a sense of fidelity in the research process was critically considered, because of its complexities in relation to the use of biography. Ethical principles were rigorously applied.

The findings of the study were the result of an iterative and rigorous analysis. A single overarching theme “The submissive nature of occupational participation” emerged during the analytical and interpretive process. The theme encompassed three core categories: “Niks gechange nie” [*nothing changes*]: perpetuating patterns of participation; “Maybe sommige dinge is possible” [*maybe some things are possible*]: the realm of possibility; and “Dit kan beter wees” [*it can be better*]: shifts in participation. Understanding the interplay between the three categories in relation to the overarching theme allowed discovery of the factors which support and perpetuate the submissive nature of the occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school. These include the concept of ‘chance’; the use of ‘sagacity’ or ‘proxy-sagacity’; and the influence of personal occupational history and the collective historical identity associated with Lavender Hill. These factors interact dynamically to result in occupational marginalisation and occupational reconciliation as a result of place integration. Occupational injustice is thus an inevitable reality for men who drop out of school.

The study concluded that since men who drop out of school lack choice and control in their daily occupational participation, they require assistance in negotiating their occupational trajectories. The difficulties associated with addressing the complexities of the nature of their occupational participation are acknowledged, but some ideas are provided for the manner in which occupational therapy could contribute. Opportunities for future research are presented to inspire further critical theoretical engagement with this particular occupational transition.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Chance: The lucky and coincidental presentation of an opportunity for participation or an individual who promoted access to an opportunity.

Collective historical identity: The identity of a particular social group shared as a result of their existence in a particular historical time and place.

Coloured identity: An ambiguous identity born out of the process of creolisation which involves the “construction of an identity out of elements of ruling as well as subaltern cultures” (Erasmus, 2001, p. 16). Coloured identity is not simply about the racial classification system used during Apartheid, but involves the construction of an identity “made” and “remade” by coloured people as they participate in their daily lives (Erasmus, 2001, p. 16).

Coloured men: Men between the ages of 20 and 60 who were designated ‘coloured’ during Apartheid in South Africa.

Compulsory education phase: This is defined as the years of schooling beginning with grade 1 and ending with grade 9 (DoE, 2008).

Disadvantaged community: A group of people living in the same geographical area who, as a collective, are deprived of some of the basic necessities and advantages of life, such as adequate housing, medical care or educational facilities (<http://www.answers.com/topic/disadvantaged>).

Dropping out of school: An occupational transition that involves giving up the occupation of school. It is considered to be a “multidimensional life course process” (Lessard et al, 2008, p. 38).

Learner: A school-going adolescent.

Occupation: A form of social action encompassing the transactional relationship between habit, context and creativity (Cutchin, Aldrich, Luc Balliard & Coppola, 2008).

Occupational choice: This occurs when choice is applied to participation in occupations (Galvaan, in press). Occupational choice is the outcome of a decision

regarding participation or a process when choices for participation are made (Galvaan, in press). Occupational choice manifests when people act agentically during participation (Galvaan, in press).

Occupational identity: “A composite sense of who one is and wishes to become” evolving in relation to a person’s occupational participation over the course of their lives (Kielhofner, 2002, p. 119).

Occupational justice: The just and equitable participation of all people in accordance with a utopian view of society where all have the opportunity to engage in occupations that are meaningful and promote health and well-being (Stadnyk, Townsend & Wilcock, 2010).

Occupational participation: Participation in society through occupation.

Occupational perspective: “Describes a standpoint whereby the significance of phenomena is described in relation to relational human action as described in the discipline of occupational science. It appreciates that human action is shaped through habit, context and creativity” (Galvaan, 2010, p. 8).

Occupational reconciliation: The harmonisation of occupational engagement within the constraints of the context as a result of the lack of opportunity to exert substantial choice and control in relation to this engagement (Galvaan, 2000).

Occupational repertoire: “The set of occupations an individual has at a specific point in the life course” (Davis & Polatajko, 2006, p. 137).

Occupational trajectory: The path/course that a person’s occupational participation follows or may follow across their lifespan.

Occupational transition: “A major change in the occupational repertoire of a person in which one or several occupations change, disappear and/or are replaced by others” (Jonsson, 2010, p. 212).

Opportunity: “A favourable or advantageous circumstance or set of circumstances” (www.thefreedictionary.com/_/dict.aspx?word=opportunity) that results in beneficial participation in occupations that enrich a person’s life.

Participation: Engagement in the situations of daily life.

Personal occupational history: The individual-level occupations and occupational choices reflected across a person's life in relation to particular situations or transitions. The personal occupational history is always understood in relation to current participation at a particular point in the life course.

Personally reckless participation: This involves participation that is characterised by risk-taking behaviour.

Place integration: The coordination and reconstruction of a context through social action in order to bring harmony to ongoing transactions with it, the outcome of which is a person and place becoming one through time (Cutchin, 2004, p. 309).

Proxy-sagacity: A person who provides for another person the wisdom and practical insight required to take advantage of chance and its associated opportunities.

Risk-taking behaviour: Any behaviour that potentially compromises a person's health and well-being

Sagacity: The wisdom and practical insight employed in relation to chance (Fine & Deegan, 1996) that enables a person to take advantage of an opportunity.

School dropout: A person who has dropped out of school at any stage during the course of his school career.

Youth: Any person between the ages of 14 and 35 years (National Youth Policy 2009-2014).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I introduce the focus of this study. I frame its experiential backdrop and provide the rationale for engaging in such an inquiry. In doing so, I draw on an occupational justice perspective to illustrate the importance of the study to the discipline of occupational science and the profession of occupational therapy. I end by identifying the purpose, aim and objectives of this research.

1.1 Experiential context of the study

1.1.1 My 'research' story

The birth of this study came about as a corollary of my practice as an occupational therapist in a community known as Lavender Hill, situated in Cape Town in the Western Cape of South Africa. My 'research' story begins in 2005 when I started offering occupational therapy services at mainstream schools in Lavender Hill in conjunction with the Division of Occupational Therapy at the University of Cape Town. Lavender Hill is one of the areas to which coloured people were forcibly removed during the Apartheid¹ years (Group Areas Act, 1950). The result was the formation of a community that lacks the infrastructure required for people to flourish. The sinister intention of the now-abolished Apartheid government ensured the perpetuated lack of opportunities for growth in this community, which is evident in poor housing conditions, unemployment and social ills such as gangsterism and a high rate of recreational drug use (New World Foundation, 2011).

¹ Apartheid was a system of institutionalised racism in South Africa from 1948-1994 (www.africanencyclopedia.com/apartheid/apartheid.html). Under this system all South Africans were categorised according to their 'race' groups as 'black', 'coloured', 'white' or 'Indian' (www.africanencyclopedia.com/apartheid/apartheid.html). The legalisation of a series of oppressive laws ensured the marginalisation and exclusion of all people designated coloured, black or Indian from participating in mainstream society (www.africanencyclopedia.com/apartheid/apartheid.html). The Apartheid system was divisive in its aim, resulting in separate rights and privileges for different race groups. Whites enjoyed full privileges, while Indian people, coloured people, and black people experienced exclusion and discrimination in various levels. Black people were the most disadvantaged. The term 'black' has also been used to encompass the oppressive experiences of coloured, Indian and black people as a unitary challenge to the segregation along racial lines.

I focused my work with learners in these schools on issues of citizenship, and the development of their occupational potential believing this to be necessary to realise a sense of justice in post-Apartheid South Africa. In doing so I became acutely aware of my own privileged social position. Not only do I possess a tertiary qualification, but I am also a white person. In a country with a history of division and separate privileges along racial lines, this set me apart from the learners and families that I met during my work. As has been previously illustrated in literature, South Africa has “been rearticulating its intergroup relations” (Steyn, 2005, p. 119) since 1994. My own taken-for-granted privileged background served to isolate me from understanding the Lavender Hill community members’ daily lived experiences. As a result of this, I often wondered about the legitimacy of my place in practicing occupational therapy in this community. I realised that I needed to establish a narrative that not only interrogated who I was as a white South African (Steyn, 2005), but also what I did with the privilege associated with my complex social position.

Desperate to connect with and understand people living in Lavender Hill, I set about trying to form close interpersonal relationships with the young adolescents with whom I worked. I also reflected deeply in an attempt to understand how my privileged social position shaped the way that I understood life in this context. My reflection prompted a painful and notable awareness of the injustices faced by the people in this community. Since the majority of my work took place within the schools, this was particularly salient for me when I considered the quality of education available for learners. School in Lavender Hill doesn’t appear to be a place where the flourishing of potential is evident or encouraged. Comparatively, there are vast differences between the high quality education I received and the education children in Lavender Hill receive, which is, in my opinion, of compromised quality. South Africa’s Gini co-efficient, which highlights the vast discrepancies in income levels between a privileged minority and a disadvantaged majority, indicates that it is one of the most inequitable countries in the world (Index Mundi, 2011). This sets the stage to perpetuate the Apartheid system where the minority have access to good quality education and the vast majority do not. In fact, representatives of the Department of Education in South Africa have, in the past, expressed concern over the quality of education for many children in this country

(SABC news, 2008 as cited in Gouws, Burger & Kruger, 2008). In my view these perpetuated historical inequities are unacceptable.

After a few years of work in Lavender Hill, I began to notice that some young adolescents were frequently absent from school. This eventually resulted in them leaving school permanently. I thought that, because of the strong relationships I had formed, I would be able to persuade these learners to return. This was to no avail, despite numerous pleas from both their educators and/or myself. This puzzled me. The fact that these learners would choose to or be allowed to leave school was inconceivable for me, given my privileged upbringing and educational background. I felt that if these learners were making such a choice, their prospects for the future were bleak. I began to wonder anxiously what would happen to them after dropping out since dropping out of school appeared to be a common-place occurrence in this community. Added to this, was the fact that educators and these learners' peers were not disturbed by the fact that they left school early, despite the fact that this was, in my view, a potentially life-altering decision. It perturbed me immensely that the learners who dropped out seemed to simply disappear off the radar. At least, they disappeared off of my occupational therapy radar.

The question that began to occupy my mind continuously was "what do the school dropouts in Lavender Hill do after they drop out?" Their daily occupations, as for all people, had to have implications for their health and well-being (Wilcock, 1998). The possible nature of the occupational participation of school dropouts in Lavender Hill thus intrigued me and begged further exploration.

1.2 Educational attainment and the magnitude of school dropout in South Africa

As a result of my concern regarding school dropout, I began to investigate this phenomenon, with particular reference to Lavender Hill in the broader South African context. I found that certain reports had documented the issue of school dropout in relation to communities such as Lavender Hill (Bolowana, 2004; Keating, 2008; Panday & Arends, 2008). These reports illustrated that, at the time, there were large numbers of children dropping out of school as early as grade 6 and 7. The number of coloured learners who drop out was intimated to be exceptionally high (Keating, 2008). Research

concurs with this, showing that coloured youth in Cape Town are less likely to expect to complete school (Beutel & Anderson, 2007).

A discussion document towards an antipoverty strategy for South Africa (Office of the President, 2008) details the severe challenges faced by schools in disadvantaged communities such as Lavender Hill. This report shows that the worst educational outcomes are linked to the most disadvantaged communities and that there is a long history of poor performance and low aspirations in these communities. School achievement therefore appears to be undervalued in such communities. The South African 2007 community survey supports this presupposition by illustrating alarming statistics linked to educational attainment (Stats SA, 2007a) in South Africa. Statistics show that only 40.1% of South Africans aged 20 years or older have completed their high school education (Stats SA, 2007a). More alarming is the fact that the most recent General Household Survey shows that there are over 300 000 children between the ages of 7 and 15 years who do not attend an educational institution (Stats SA, 2007b). The number of people not completing school is highest among black and coloured learners (DoE, 2008). The last Census that was conducted in South Africa, in 2001, shows that only 13.61% of the total population of adults in Lavender Hill who are 20 years or older have completed grade 12 (Stats SA, 2001). It follows that school dropout could be construed as a viable and expected alternative to completing school for some learners in contexts such as Lavender Hill. Further to this fewer men in Lavender Hill complete grade 12 than women (Stats SA, 2001).

Juxtaposed with the often expected and logical choice to leave school in a community such as Lavender Hill is the notion of the possible curtailing of future opportunities for productive participation. The value of a grade 12 education in providing substantial advantage in the employment arena has been questioned (Cosser & Sehlola, 2009), but its place in ensuring potential access to institutions of further learning cannot be disputed. Attaining a grade 12 becomes a mechanism that moderates future participation in other educational and work opportunities.

As a result of the concern and debate around the matter of school dropout in recent years, Naledi Pandor, the Minister of Education for South Africa in 2007, commissioned an inquiry into the problem of school dropout in the South African context. The

Ministerial Committee on Learner Retention within the South African Schooling System (DoE, 2008) found that a high number of learners drop out in grades 10-12. The report of the commission noted that learners who choose to leave school at the end of grade 9 are technically not dropouts because they have completed the compulsory education phase and can go on to access further education and training opportunities (DoE, 2008). It was, however, also emphasised that the educational system in South Africa does not provide suitable alternatives for those learners who do not manage to or choose not to continue with their studies after grade 9. Although the report concluded that the number of learners who leave school before completing the compulsory education phase is statistically insignificant (DoE, 2008), personal experience in Lavender Hill suggests that there are a number of learners who choose to leave school before or just after entering high school. Although this group may be small, their participation, and its impact on their well-being, is no less important than the larger group of learners who leave school after completing grade 9. Statistical significance therefore needs to be considered alongside the real life implications for those concerned.

1.3 School dropout, occupational justice and the profession of occupational therapy

In relation to the issue of school dropout, the profession of occupational therapy's place in the educational arena requires consideration. Since occupational therapists should be concerned with individuals' and groups' experience of occupational justice (Townsend & Whiteford, 2005) notions of participation and potential become important. Yet, in my experience, the profession tends to focus on the remediation of learning disabilities within mainstream and special school contexts in South Africa, ignoring other aspects of school or school-related participation, which might include school dropout and its implications. The proposed redefinition of the concept of occupational engagement includes a broader focus on peoples' diverse participation in a broad range of life situations (Polatajko, Davis, Stewart, Cantin, Amoroso, Purdie & Zimmerman, 2007). This pushes the profession to critically consider commonly forgotten issues, such as school dropout.

It has been emphasised that participation takes place within a web of 'invisible occupational determinants' which determine the possibility of accessing certain

opportunities (Stadnyk, Townsend & Wilcock, 2010, p. 342). School dropout might be one such invisible determinant. Since the realisation of occupational justice is an important goal in the promotion of health and well-being (Stadnyk et al, 2010) occupational therapists should be concerned with the occupational participation of learners who drop out of school and the impact of this on their participation patterns.

Although I acknowledge that, first and foremost, learners should be encouraged to stay in school, the statistics highlighted above illustrate the magnitude of this problem and emphasise the necessity for occupational therapy to consider it worthy of exploration. An occupational justice perspective implores the consideration of the way in which peoples' participation is situated within the society in which they live (Stadnyk et al, 2010). As such, an understanding of the participation of people who drop out of school is essential if occupational therapy is to fulfil its mandate for an occupationally-just world.

1.4 Racial identity and vulnerability for occupational injustice in the South African context

1.4.1 Coloured identity and Lavender Hill

Although it has been argued that race does not actually exist (Erasmus, 2001), it has also been asserted that race is a helpful construct insofar as it helps us to consider its consequences (Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses & Seekings, 2010). This is particularly pertinent in the South African context because of our Apartheid history and the influence that this has had on communities such as Lavender Hill. It is thus imperative to consider race, because of its pervasive impact on the participation of different social groups in post-Apartheid South Africa. The experience of being part of a particular race group in South Africa has implications for the way in which people are able to participate, particularly as a result of the historic systematic denial of black, Indian and coloured people's economic rights (Martin, 2006). Race and social class are thus intricately connected in the South African context.

The categorisation of people who were regarded as coloured into a particular race group during Apartheid resulted in a 'situated in-betweenness' (Erasmus, 2001). To be coloured was to be worse than white, but better than black (Erasmus, 2001). Levels of

privilege were (and are) evident within the coloured community (Erasmus, 2001). Working-class coloured people had less access to opportunities than middle-class coloured people. Lavender Hill is a predominantly working-class coloured community. The effects of race on access to the material resources for everyday living are evident when viewing the perpetuated disadvantage that this community lives with on a daily basis. This historic disadvantage results in the continued marginalisation of the coloured people who reside in this community. Further to this, the predominant role that Apartheid-constructions of coloured identity play on the marginalised participation of young adolescents in the community of Lavender Hill has been highlighted in previous research (Galvaan, 2010).

Coloured identity is thus an important construct to consider in understanding school dropout and its implications for occupational participation in a community such as Lavender Hill. Community members' race creates a vulnerability which exposes them to the potential experience of occupational injustice.

1.4.2 Racial inequality in the South African schooling system

The education system that was put in place during Apartheid for black, coloured and Indian learners has been described as having "the most devastating long-term consequences of any part of Apartheid's elaborate apparatus" (Martin, 2006, p. 35). During Apartheid, school governance took the form of distinct government departments, which provided separate education for black, coloured, Indian and white children (Martin, 2006). Government expenditure on coloured children's education during Apartheid was half that which was spent on the education of white children (Thomas, 1996). Coupled with this, is the fact that the entire Apartheid education system was based on the premise that black, coloured and Indian children should be educated exclusively for the expected roles that they would play in life (Martin, 2006). Since the Apartheid government believed that black, coloured and Indian people were only fit for menial working-class occupations, their education set out to equip them to do just that. Consequently coloured learners received an inferior education.

Since low levels of achievement were expected of coloured learners they were, in many cases, not prepared for further education and training or for participation in occupations other than those considered to be working-class. My own experience of

working in schools in Lavender Hill leads me to believe that the situation is not very different today. This is supported by the argument that the South African schooling system continues to show aspects of racial inequality (Soudien, 2004). Some schools continue to use Apartheid logic in teaching contexts (Soudien, 2007) and low educational expectations of learners in Lavender Hill have been shown to be present (Galvaan, 2010).

Race might, therefore, continue to be a factor in shaping patterns of achievement in school. Historical influences shape constructions of expected school achievement for coloured learners in Lavender Hill, systematically creating a vulnerable population with regard to the experience of occupational injustice in the school environment. This creates a situation where there is a high likelihood that coloured learners will drop out of school, exposing them to the possible experience of occupational injustice thereafter.

1.5 The occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school: a broader focus

Given the multiple definitions that exist for the term occupation, it is no surprise that it becomes difficult to discern an exact meaning of the construct 'occupational participation'. More recently in the history of occupational therapy, there has been a move away from a heavy focus on occupational performance in order to delineate a broader concern for occupational therapists regarding people's engagement in occupation. According to Polatajko et al (2007) occupational engagement is thought to encompass both the occupations that people 'do' and those occupations that people 'have.' The actual act of performing an occupation is less important than participating and being involved in a diversity of ways (Polatajko et al, 2007).

For the purposes of this research, occupational participation is thought to encompass the broadest definition of occupational engagement as outlined by Polatajko et al (2007). It thus involves a focus on the way in which people engage in the situations of daily life through occupation. The importance of considering the phenomenon of school dropout from an occupational justice perspective has been emphasised here and notions of the occupational participation of school dropouts are contemplated in relation to this. This means that in this study occupational participation is considered to

be about school dropouts' participation in the context of South African society through occupation.

I have previously illuminated the problem of school dropout in Lavender Hill and emphasised the lack of understanding regarding these individuals' occupational participation. The exclusive focus of this study on men who drop out of school is as a result of the indication in relevant educational literature that more male adolescents drop out of school than females in certain districts in South Africa (Motala, Dieltiens & Sayed, 2009). Statistics indicate that this too is the case in Lavender Hill (Stats SA, 2001). Further to this, it has been argued that it is "important to recognise that men as well as women may be disadvantaged by social and economic structures and that all have the right to a life free from poverty and oppression" (Cleaver, 2002, p. 2). This aligns with the justice imperatives of this study.

1.6 Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was, therefore, to generate insight into the occupational participation of men in a previously disadvantaged community in Cape Town, South Africa, who drop out of school. The data generated intends to contribute knowledge to the discipline of occupational science and inform the profession of occupational therapy. This will enable the profession to begin to develop practice imperatives in relation to the occupational needs of men who drop out of school in the South African context.

1.7 Study Aim

To describe the nature of the occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school.

1.8 Study Objectives

1. To explore the occupations that men engage in before and after dropping out of school
2. To uncover the personal, social and temporal factors that inform the occupational participation of men who drop out of school

CHAPTER 2

THEORY AND LITERATURE

In this chapter I frame the theoretical background to this study in order to capture what is already known about the occupational participation of men who drop out of school in South Africa. The literature that I reviewed revealed that no studies have, as yet, considered this phenomenon using methods that would provide a complete and full understanding. Further to this, only one other study focused exclusively on men (Davis, 2006).

The chapter begins by situating the phenomenon of school dropout in occupational terms. School dropout is considered as an occupational transition which manifests as a process. Studies on occupational transitions and occupational participation are reviewed to shed light on aspects of importance. The chapter then moves to consider literature on school dropout using the lens of occupational transitions and occupational participation. It concludes by illustrating the important place of this inquiry and its methods.

2.1 An occupational perspective of the phenomenon of dropping out of school: transition and process

A thorough search² of the local and international occupational therapy and occupational science research literature indicated that no previous research has focused on the occupational participation of people after they drop out of school. Although research from the Sociology, Psychology and Education fields speaks about school dropout as a phenomenon, the findings do not explicitly allow for the conceptualisation of this phenomenon in terms of occupational participation.

² I searched the following databases using the key words (occupation OR engagement OR participation) AND (school) AND (dropped out OR dropout*): Academic Search Premier; Africa-Wide Information; CINAHL; ERIC; Humanities International Complete; PsycARTICLES; PsycINFO; SocINDEX with full text; Google Scholar; JStor; Proquest. I initially began with the databases that would include occupational therapy research but then expanded my search to other disciplines. Further to this, I hand searched all occupational therapy journals in print in the University of Cape Town Libraries for the period 2005-2011 as well as textbooks in Occupational Therapy that focus on issues of occupational participation and schooling.

The consideration of the phenomenon of school dropout in occupational terms is important for this study partially because when learners choose to leave school, they give up the occupation of schooling in favour of other occupations. The opportunity to attain an educational qualification is then compromised. These learners undergo a transition through which a major occupation is lost and is replaced by others. This is consistent with the definition of an 'occupational transition' defined in recent years as "a major change in the occupational repertoire of a person in which one or several occupations change, disappear and/or are replaced by others" (Jonsson, 2010, p. 212). Since having an education is named as one of the underlying structural occupational instruments which contributes to the possibility of just occupational outcomes (Stadnyk et al, 2010), leaving school may have negative implications for people in terms of their participation in society. Depending on the learners' contextual backgrounds, their capacity to access other occupational opportunities might be influenced by such a transition.

Considering school dropout as an occupational transition lends to the view that this phenomenon might be a process rather than an event. The primary view of some sociologists who have written on school dropout (Entwistle, Alexander & Olsen, 2004; Lessard, Butler-Kisber, Fortin, Marcotte, Potvin & Royer, 2008) concurs with this perspective. Based on research, Lessard et al (2008) ascribe to the notion that school dropout is a "multidimensional life course process" (p. 38).

2.2 Framing occupational transitions: The features of related occupational participation

The consequences of occupational transitions have been investigated. In total I found four research studies that focused specifically on the occupational participation that occurred during and after an occupational transition (Blair, 2000; Jonsson, Borell & Sadlo, 2000; Jonsson, 2010; Pettican & Prior, 2011; Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2007). Although these studies did not focus on school dropout as the transition under investigation, they offer important insights into certain aspects related to the occupational participation of people who experience an occupational transition. In this section I review each of these studies in order to ascertain the important considerations with regard to occupational participation in relation to an occupational transition. I

conclude by summarising the key findings from the reviewed literature in order to provide a theoretical lens through which to view the research on school dropout from other disciplines.

2.2.1 The importance of occupational participation at the point of transition

A study in Britain focused on the centrality of occupation in the navigation of life transitions (Blair, 2000). Blair (2000) conducted qualitative research with third-year undergraduate occupational therapy students at the Queen Margaret University College in Edinburgh who, during the completion of an elective module entitled 'Adult Development – Life Transitions and Crisis' (p. 231), had worked with people experiencing life transitions. These students were interviewed to ascertain their experiences of interviewing people undergoing life transitions. The researcher chose to focus her exploration with these students around their perspectives of their clients' occupational behaviour at the point of transition. The findings of this study highlighted that occupational participation appears to serve a protective function for people's sense of self during and after occupational transitions (Blair, 2000). Occupational participation at the point of transition was therefore thought to be of importance (Blair, 2000).

2.2.2 Renegotiating occupational patterns subsequent to transition: adapting new ways of participating in occupations

The most complete study documenting the work-to-retirement transition was a 7-year longitudinal study by Hans Jonsson and his colleagues in Stockholm, Sweden, involving quantitative and qualitative methods (Jonsson et al, 2000; Jonnson, 2010). In the qualitative part of this study thirty-two participants were interviewed prior to, during, and after the transition from work to retirement. Participants had varied socioeconomic statuses, genders and work backgrounds. Narrative methods were used to collect and analyse data. The study highlighted that the experience of this occupational transition was influenced by contextual variables (Jonsson et al, 2000). The findings suggest that the loss of the productive occupation of work results in a global reorganisation of the person's entire occupational pattern. A new pattern, that participants adapt, and adapt to, over time, develops in the absence of paid work. Occupational participation after retirement was shaped by what Jonsson (2010) calls "the paradox of freedom" (p. 217).

The participants were surprised by how difficult it was to structure their free time independently following this transition. They found that they were challenged by the need to manage their new routines in the absence of the external structure that work had previously provided. Further to this, the meaning attached to certain occupations was lost, as their meaning had previously been found in relation to work (Jonsson et al, 2000). It was evident that the structure of daily occupations had an impact on the experience of meaning. The experience of spontaneous change through the loss of employment resulted in the evolution of new occupational forms through the reorganisation of occupational patterns. The reconfiguration of occupational patterns was negotiated through the process of occupational adaptation.

A subsequent study (Pettican & Prior, 2011) in Britain, inspired by the work of Jonsson and his colleagues, sought to uncover individual experiences of retirement as well as the resultant challenges and benefits of such an occupational transition (Pettican & Prior, 2011). A qualitative, phenomenological approach was used. The findings of the Pettican & Prior (2011) study again emphasised the process of significant occupational readjustment that had to take place in relation to such an occupational transition. The nature of occupational participation subsequent to the transition of retirement played a crucial role in mediating health and well-being. The participants displayed the need to seek out new and alternative occupations, through the process of occupational adaptation, in order to replace the positive aspects of the occupation of work and maintain a sense of well-being. New opportunities for participation that were in line with the participants' capabilities served to promote health.

A small qualitative occupational science study focused on the link between the loss of driving as a significant occupation and the resultant impact on occupational identity (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2007). The findings of the Vrkljan & Miller Polgar (2007) study purported that loss of the occupation of driving resulted in significant disruption to occupational patterns. This influenced the ability to fulfil important life roles impacting negatively on the participant's sense of occupational identity. The authors suggest that particular occupational transitions might result in occupational disruption. Individuals are then forced to "reconstruct their occupational identity through occupational adaptation" in order to overcome the experience of occupational disruption and achieve a sense of well-being (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2007, p. 35). Occupational adaptation in

the face of occupational disruption is thought to be critical if occupational deprivation is to be prevented (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2007). Successful occupational adaptation to a loss in a particular occupation is thought to result in the preservation of occupational identity (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2007). Occupational participation provides the context in which individuals reconstruct their lives and link their past and future selves during the process of an occupational transition (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2007).

Differing from the Jonsson (2010) study, the Pettican & Prior (2011) study contributed new understanding in terms of the way in which a satisfying retirement routine is established. Pettican & Prior (2011) suggest that this takes place through access to a choice of meaningful occupations that retirees can participate in, rather than structured time-use. One limitation of the study that needs to be mentioned is the fact that all of the participants had previously participated in professional and skilled occupations prior to retirement. This influences the way in which occupations prior and post-retirement would be configured and impact on the experience of health and well-being. A significant finding of the Jonsson study was that the participants who adapted well to retirement did so as a result of the presence of what Jonsson (2010) named “engaging occupations” (p. 221). These were occupations that went beyond the ordinary occupations of daily life and about which the participants were exceptionally passionate (Jonsson, 2010). The presence or absence of these sorts of occupations appeared to be linked directly to participants’ ability to experience retirement positively. Participating in engaging occupations as an outcome of occupational adaptation may, therefore, play a role in mediating health and well-being.

In conclusion, the studies on occupational transitions have highlighted that understanding a person’s participation in occupation prior to and after the transition provides insight into the way in which occupational participation is configured in relation to the occupational transition. Participation after the transition is reflective of the way in which people renegotiate their daily occupations through the process of occupational adaptation. This process of negotiation is thought to be of critical importance in the attainment of health and well-being.

2.3 Occupational participation and school dropout: Fragmented, incomplete and limited understanding gleaned from other disciplines

I concluded the previous section by indicating the related aspects of occupational participation and occupational transitions. Since I have chosen to construct school dropout as an occupational transition, I interpret the relevant literature from the sociology, psychology and educational fields by drawing on the lessons learnt regarding occupational participation and occupational transitions presented in the previous section. Rather than reviewing each study in turn, I use the literature to create an understanding of the occupational participation of those who choose to leave school, prior to and after dropping out. Certain studies are used across sub-sections as their findings contribute to understanding various aspects of this process.

The literature on school dropout is drawn predominantly from international studies due to the dearth of literature focusing on the South African context. I do, however, specify where literature is drawn from in order to ensure that the insights generated about the phenomenon of school dropout, and the related participation of those concerned, are understood in context.

2.3.1 Occupational participation prior to dropping out of school: Poor academic performance, risky behaviour and associated factors

Although studies on school dropout do not speak specifically to occupational participation prior to dropping out, they do highlight aspects of occupational behaviour which contribute to the way in which occupational participation occurs. In doing so, they highlight the risk factors for dropout and frame the reasons for the occurrence of this phenomenon. In this section, I focus on highlighting the character of occupational participation before individuals drop out of school. The selected studies highlight the poor academic performance and risk behaviour of adolescents prior to choosing to leave school. Some studies indicate potential contributing factors to this kind of participation. One study found that a lack of involvement in extramural activities at school was characteristic of those who choose to drop out.

In a Canadian study by Lessard et al (2008), researchers used a qualitative approach to study the way in which school dropouts navigate their educational journeys. The intent

of the study was to understand the precipitating factors leading to eventual school dropout by interviewing 80 adolescents who had dropped out of school. The study population consisted of 36 females and 44 males (Lessard et al, 2008). The findings of the study describe a process which individuals undergo prior to dropping out of school that the researchers call 'teetering' (Lessard et al, 2008, p. 31). Teetering is characterised by behaviour that is indicative of a slow disengagement from the school context. Teetering participants in the Lessard et al (2008) study engaged in acts of truancy and, in many cases, chose to abuse drugs prior to leaving school. They described feeling invisible in the school context, often struggling with their school work, and being involved in fights (Lessard et al, 2008). The findings reveal that the participants' educational journeys were shaped by particular behaviours related to their occupational participation that, over time, influenced their final decision to leave the educational setting.

In another quantitative study (Archambault, Janosz, Fallu & Pagani, 2009), Canadian researchers demonstrated the link between diminishing school engagement in terms of individual cognitive, affective and behavioural components, and eventual school dropout. The results of this study indicated, surprisingly, that the behavioural component appeared to be predominantly responsible for eventual school dropout. Behaviours were evaluated in the form of school attendance and specific classroom interaction. It appeared that behaviours such as truancy and non-compliance in the classroom were features of occupational participation demonstrated by school dropouts and were responsible for their decision to leave school. This was echoed in a study in South Africa (Instant Grass, 2007) which also highlighted the peer pressure that dropouts experienced to engage in antisocial and delinquent behaviour, which precipitated dropping out.

Poor school performance as an eventual reason for school dropout has been echoed in other studies (Instant Grass, 2007; Motala et al, 2009, Scanlon & Mellard, 2002; Tidwell, 1988). In a South African study, Motala et al (2009) noted that grade repetition is high, particularly for boys, in the Dutywa and Ekurhuleni districts in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng province of South Africa respectively. Occupational participation prior to dropping out is therefore characterised by poor academic performance in these school districts. In an American quantitative study by Scanlon & Mellard (2002) that focused

on the academic and participation profiles of dropouts with and without disabilities, researchers found that participation prior to dropout was characterised by a lack of interest in school and high rates of absenteeism. Poor school performance might be attributable to these associated factors. Evidence for this is provided in a participatory study examining school dropout for Latino adolescents in the United States of America (Nesman, 2007). Nesman (2007) focused on the barriers that Latino adolescents faced to full participation in the school environment and their resultant dropping out of school. Barriers included discriminatory attitudes of teachers and a lack of assistance with academic work. Outside of the school environment, pressure was placed on the participants to participate in activities that did not lead to them attracting favour. These activities were associated with being bored, wanting to be popular amongst their peers, and believing that they had to portray a particular image of a Latino. This peer pressure, together with the opportunity to join a gang, was cited as the biggest reason for Latino adolescents dropping out of school.

Adolescents who drop out of school have been shown to engage in fewer non-academic extramural activities than their peers who stay in school. A quantitative study by Mahoney & Cairns (1997) found that school dropouts consistently participated in fewer extramural activities several years prior to leaving school when compared with adolescents who did not drop out. Mahoney & Cairns (1997) concluded that extramural activities of this nature might serve a protective function in relation to school dropout. This study is significant in highlighting the potential role of occupational participation prior to dropping out. The results indicate the possibility that school dropouts are not involved or do not have access to the sort of occupational participation that might protect them against dropping out. It is thus possible that they approach the occupational transition of dropping out with the possibility of limited participation in occupations that may enrich their lives.

This section has highlighted the fact that those who drop out of school tend to exhibit poor school performance that may be related to feeling alienated in a particular school context prior to choosing to leave school. Outside of the school context these individuals engage in risky behaviour and may engage in few or no extramural activities. Although the studies presented are not related to a particular group of adolescents or a single context, the understanding garnered paints a picture of poor school and school-related

participation. It appears evident that those who drop out of school participate prior to this transition in ways that both contribute to the transition occurring and which may not be helpful once the transition occurs. However, the manner in which this occurs is not evident in the exploration that I have conducted of the available literature. In the next section I explore the possibilities for the occupational participation of people after dropping out of school and indicate that there appears to be a high likelihood that problematic engagement continues to occur after dropping out.

2.3.2 Patterns of occupational participation after dropping out of school: Limited opportunity for enriching occupational participation

In this section I present an overview of the possible occupational participation that occurs after dropping out of school. The literature suggests that the experience of participation after dropping out of school is largely negative. Unemployment and risk-taking behaviours appear to be common, with crime and gang-related participation as realistic possibilities. It appears that, although the school dropouts settle into a new pattern of occupations after dropping out of school, the way in which this new pattern of participation is negotiated seems to be complex and unclear. This may be related to the suggestion that the time just after dropping out of school might involve a period of floundering due to school dropouts' developmental stage and the factors which cause dropout (Halpern, 1993; Rumberger, 1995). The experience of occupational participation after dropping out may therefore be negative.

Perhaps the most significant study highlighting the patterns of occupational participation subsequent to dropping out of school was conducted by an organisation known as Instant Grass in South Africa (Instant Grass, 2007). This study employed a qualitative approach to represent the various perspectives on school dropout amongst youth in different communities in the South African context. The findings of this study were supplemented with data from group discussions held between regional managers of Instant Grass in rural areas in the Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal, as well as township and urban areas in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. The Instant Grass (2007) study indicated that the occupational participation of school dropouts tends to be restricted, with the experience of being a dropout being negative. The dropouts suggested that their experience of this transition was "like living in a prison" (Instant

Grass, 2007, p. 2). They felt that society viewed them negatively as 'lazy' and as 'losers', which restricted their access to certain opportunities (Instant Grass, 2007, p. 2). New occupational patterns were shaped by the fact that the participants in this study suggested that dropouts were only able to access unstable temporary employment and had no choice where this was concerned (Instant Grass, 2007). They were forced to accept whatever employment opportunity emerged and were often the victims of exploitation. The opportunity to access meaningful occupations in order to adapt successfully to the occupational transition was therefore compromised. Social networks were of crucial importance in accessing employment opportunities (Instant Grass, 2007). Unfortunately, the dropouts in the Instant Grass study only realised in retrospect the difficulties involved in finding sustainable employment (Instant Grass, 2007) and were often forced to move around frequently in order to access it. Because finding employment was difficult, the occupational participation of the school dropouts tended to include "sitting at home and doing nothing" (Instant Grass, 2007, p. 7) as well as spending time on street corners. Although learning ways of informal trading was a potential opportunity that came with spending time on the street corner, the school dropouts were exposed to ways of thinking there that had the potential to encourage engagement in activities that placed them at risk of ill-health (Instant Grass, 2007).

An earlier quantitative study exploring and comparing the in- and out-of-school activities of youth in the United States and Australia found that the participation patterns of the school dropouts in this study reflected the opportunities available in the societies in each of the two countries (Biddle, Bank, Anderson, Keats & Keats, 1981). For example, the school dropouts in Australia reported engaging in sports and other recreational pursuits that were easily accessible in their communities (Biddle et al, 1981). This was in sharp contrast to the situation for the dropouts in the American context, where recreational opportunities were expensive and adolescents reported visiting and sitting around with friends and becoming engaged in risk-taking behaviours such as consuming alcohol and taking recreational drugs (Biddle et al, 1981). An important finding in the study conducted by Biddle et al (1981) was the fact that although the school dropouts accessed certain activities, they did not have access to a wide range of options for participation. Of particular significance was the impact that dropping out of school had on accessing full-time employment. Only 11% of all youth

who participated in the study accessed full-time employment after leaving school (Biddle et al, 1981). This was echoed in the qualitative study by Nesman (2007) described previously. According to Nesman (2007), the impact of dropping out of school included: a lack of employment or lower-income job opportunities, being seen as “losers”, discouragement or depression, low self-esteem, family conflicts and increased involvement in activities such as gangs, crime and drug use (Nesman, 2007, p. 426). Engaging in crime was identified as being common amongst school dropouts in South Africa (Instant Grass, 2007). This finding is reinforced by statistics which indicate that approximately 50% of inmates in South African prisons have not completed grade 12 (Albertus, 2010). The situation is worse in America, with 82% of the adult prison population having never completed high school (Bowman, 2002). Further to this, Human Rights Watch (2005) has identified the high possibility of sexual exploitation, exposure to unsafe labour practices and homelessness for school dropouts, which will ultimately influence their experience of occupational participation.

Occupational participation which includes risk-taking behaviours appears as a common theme for school dropouts in some studies. In fact, a quantitative study by Swaim, Beauvais, Chavez and Oetting (1997) found that Mexican-American, white non-Hispanic and Native American school dropouts reported that they were 1.2 to 6.4 times more likely to abuse drugs than their counterparts who were still in school. Another quantitative American study, by Aloise-Young and Chavez (2002), highlights the risk-taking behaviour of school dropouts in the form of substance-abuse. The authors of this study, however, caution readers not to assume that all school dropouts are the same in terms of this risky behaviour, both as a reason for leaving school and as a significant activity after leaving. The study compared adolescents from Mexican American and white non-Hispanic descent and focused on determining the correlation between their reason for leaving school and their resultant substance abuse. The study found that for Mexican American adolescents the strongest correlation existed when these adolescents dropped out of school to be with their friends. However, this situation did not exist for the white non-Hispanic adolescents involved in the study. The researchers felt that this might be attributable to class differences and therefore chose to control for this through a basic measure in order to determine its significance. They found, however, that class

as socioeconomic status alone was not a substantial predictor for this situation and concluded that cultural reasons may therefore play a role.

This section has highlighted the possible occupational participation that might occur subsequent to dropping out of school. It has been shown that risk-taking behaviour might occur after a learner has dropped out of school, continuing some of the behaviour that may have been exhibited prior to dropping out. South African research has shown that unemployment and boredom, with few opportunities for participation, are common experiences for school dropouts. This has been echoed in other international research. Options for participation after dropping out of school are potentially limited, pushing those who drop out to participate in gang-related behaviour and criminal activity in many cases. However, personal accounts of the way in which participation is shaped within the lives of single individuals are missing from the literature. This means that the opportunity to understand the way in which occupational repertoires are renegotiated subsequent to the occupational transition of dropping out of school is significantly compromised.

2.3.3 Factors impacting occupational participation before and after dropping out of school: Personal and social influences

This section explores the factors which shape the occupational trajectories of individuals before and after they drop out of school. I begin by highlighting the social influences that may be responsible for dropout and which influence the development of a particular occupational trajectory after dropping out. I then unpack the personal influences which shape the way in which those individuals who drop out choose to participate.

The fact that the occupational participation of those who drop out of school is shaped by their social backgrounds has been highlighted in research (Lessard et al, 2008). For example, in the study by Lessard et al (2008) those participants who had learning difficulties or had traumatic family backgrounds characterised by conflict were more likely to engage in problematic ways prior to dropping out. Rumberger (1983) found that family background strongly influenced whether or not an individual dropped out. In a study that focused on the protective factors required to prevent learners from dropping out of school, it was shown that the quality of family life and social support

available for learners were key variables in the prevention of dropout (Lagana, 2004). A lack of parental guidance appears to influence South African school dropouts' choices with regard to occupational participation before and after leaving school (Instant Grass, 2007). The importance of parental guidance in shaping how youth participate resonates in other studies (Davis, 2006). In a qualitative study in America that focused on the social mobility of African-American high school dropouts, the participants provided insight into the way in which they were expected to make adult decisions whilst they were still only children (Davis, 2006). This had the potential to shape these adolescents' participation in significant ways, given their possible lack of capacity in doing so at this particular stage in their lives. Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir (2009) conducted research with Icelandic youth to investigate the relationship between parenting practices and school dropout. The study found that an authoritative parenting style characterised by acceptance and supervision was positively linked to completing school (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009). Parenting style was found to be more important than parental involvement in preventing dropout from occurring (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009). Parenting practices might therefore shape the nature of occupational participation prior to and post dropout.

Socioeconomic variables that influenced the occupational participation of learners before and after dropping out of school in South Africa were highlighted in the study by Instant Grass (2007). These included financial difficulties at home which resulted in learners being forced to leave school and seek employment in order to contribute to the household income. In the Rumberger (1983) study, this was the primary reason given for men leaving school early. However, in a recent quantitative survey, the Cape Area Panel Study (CAPS), conducted with over 4800 households in the Cape Town Metropole, data indicated that black and coloured youth were not often employed after they left school (Lam & Seekings, 2005). Although socioeconomic status has been highlighted in a number of international studies as being a leading cause of dropout (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Lessard et al, 2008; Davis, 2006; Lagana, 2004), Lam & Seekings (2005) indicate that opportunities for the employment of black and coloured youth in Cape Town may be limited as only a small percentage of participants in the CAPS survey attained employment after dropping out. Davis (2006) suggests that adolescents leaving school in the United States are more likely to live in poverty because of their

status as dropouts. Certain South African authors concur that dropping out of school "...exposes children to a lifelong cycle of poverty..." (Gouws et al, 2008, p. 179).

In an American study (Beam & Rumberger, 2008) which focused on the relationship between participation in non-academic school-affiliated activities and peer social capital, the latter was shown to influence student engagement and school dropout (Beam & Rumberger, 2008). Beam & Rumberger (2008) considered social capital to be both the actual and the potential resources that were found within social networks. These researchers found that access to social capital had both an up-side and a down-side. This meant that if the learners were involved in social networks where learning was prioritised and valued, they were more likely to achieve in school and avoid dropping out of school, even if they were at risk of school dropout as a result of other factors. Equally so, if the learners were exposed to social networks where rebellion and antisocial behaviour were prioritised, they seemed to be more likely to drop out. The peer group has been cited in other studies as one of the key reasons for learners choosing to leave school (Jordan, Lara & McPartland, 1996). An American study found that when young adolescents' individual aggressive characteristics were combined with their association with popular peers who were equally aggressive, they were more likely to drop out (Farmer, Estell, Leung, Trott, Bishop & Cairns, 2003). The importance of the peer group in creating particular patterns of participation prior to dropping out might perpetuate in influencing patterns of participation after dropping out of school.

The reality of occupational participation after dropping out was surprising to many dropouts in South Africa (Instant Grass, 2007). They had high expectations of what kind of participation they would be able to access after dropping out. These expectations were not in touch with reality (Instant Grass, 2007). This was also found to be the case in a study conducted by Yowell (1999) in America which explored whether expectations for academic success correspond with eventual academic outcomes. The research explored the relationship between academic expectations and the participants' educational potential. Yowell (1999) used the notion of "possible selves", "feared selves" and "hoped for selves" and interviewed Latino school dropouts in the United States in order to understand how they conceptualised themselves using these terms. The study found that few participants had the procedural knowledge required to turn "hoped for selves" into "possible selves", for educational attainment in the future. The study also

found that, despite low academic performance, these students had high aspirations. They did not have a good understanding of how their current position influenced their possibilities for accessing opportunities. There was no understanding of the necessary steps they needed to take in order to change their future outcome.

This section has shown that personal factors, in the form of unrealistic expectations related to participation, and social factors, such as family background, socioeconomic status and the peer group, might influence the character of occupational participation prior to and after choosing to drop out of school. Although the individual influence of each of these factors is notable, none of the studies explored how these factors synthesise in the lives of particular individuals in order to shape their occupational trajectories in various ways. This is an important aspect which appears to be missing from the literature and hampers a complete understanding of how these factors impact the participation of school dropouts.

2.3.4 Filling the gap: Theoretical situation of this inquiry

Although the literature reviewed has given some indication of those occupations that learners engage in prior to and after dropping out of school, as well as the contextual variables that might be responsible for the way in which these learners participate, a full understanding of the occupational participation of school dropouts is missing. How those who drop out of school renegotiate their occupational repertoires after such a transition is unclear. At this point the only possible understanding of the occupational participation of men who drop out of school is a fragmented one. Other authors call for studies employing qualitative longitudinal research designs in order to understand the phenomenon of school dropout more fully (Flischer & Charlton, 1995; Lagana, 2004). I believe that current understanding of the participation of those who drop out of school is fragmented and lacks clarity due to the fact that although there is ample literature documenting *what* school dropouts do, no research addresses fully *how* and *why* they do it. Further to this, there is an absence of literature taking into account the gendered dimensions of the phenomenon as it relates to the participation of men who drop out of school. This fragmented understanding is compounded by the absence of specific occupational science and occupational therapy research into the phenomenon of school dropout using an occupational perspective, and the fact that very little of the research

presented above originates within the South African context. The importance of and specific place of this study is thus emphasised.

The indication for personal accounts of the phenomenon in question is evident, since at this point it is impossible to understand how school dropouts adapt after experiencing this occupational transition and renegotiate their occupational repertoires. A biographical inquiry into the phenomenon of the occupational participation of school dropouts is thus warranted. Although the scope of this study is focused on the experiences of a single gender and one particular context in South Africa, it intends to begin to contribute to the evidence-base regarding how the occupational participation of men who drop out of school is constructed, as well as the reasons for this.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I describe the research methodology used. I begin by justifying the chosen approach and explain the research process. I give a detailed account of participant selection, data generation methods, and analytic and interpretive procedures. I explain the idiosyncrasies of achieving fidelity in this type of research and how this was achieved. The chapter draws to a close with a description of the ethical considerations and their application.

3.1 Selected methodological approach and justification for its use

A qualitative design was selected for this study due to the nature of the inquiry. Since the occupational participation of men who drop out of school is the focus of this study I needed to consider the best qualitative method I could employ in order to understand this construct. The biographical method, with the life story at its core, was thought to be the most suitable approach.

Life stories offer the opportunity to examine the lives of school dropouts retrospectively, which was an important consideration given the nature of information required to meet the aims and objectives of the study. Further to this, life stories have been shown to be valuable tools in occupational therapy research (Wicks & Whiteford, 2003). Since life stories are personal interpretations of occupational participation across the lifespan, the biographical method was well suited to understanding the construction of occupation at different points in the life courses of the participants (Wicks & Whiteford, 2003).

The biographical approach was an intrinsically appealing and suitable approach given my research interest. It is, however, a complex methodology and as a researcher I had to prepare myself to engage with the process. Later in this chapter I describe how this was done (see 3.3), as well as the way in which I used my experience with my first participant as a pilot in order to reflect on, learn, and deepen the way in which I engaged with subsequent participants (see 3.5.1).

3.2 The research process

Biography is a broad term used to denote a variety of biographical approaches (Creswell, 1998). For the purposes of this study the term biography refers to the generation of individual life stories that were used to understand the nature of occupational participation for men in Lavender Hill who have dropped out of school.

As a researcher I preferred Denzin's (1989) framework for conducting a biography. Denzin (1989) emphasises the importance of an interpretive approach and argues for the declaration of the researcher's own position and experience in the writing of the biography. His work has been elaborated on and its importance emphasised by other scholars of qualitative and biographical methods (Cresswell, 1998; Plummer, 2001). I felt that employing an interpretive approach was important because I come from a remarkably different background to that of the participants in the study. I am a woman who was trying to understand the experience of men from a different community to that of my own and possibly from a different historical time. This is a significant challenge for researchers and I critically considered how I managed this in the research process through consistently reflecting on and documenting my stance and social position (See Appendix A). I felt that the use of the interpretive approach would partly enable my readers to understand why I came to particular interpretations and conclusions in the data analysis process. I have also aspired to a particular way of constructing this thesis so that readers are able to also draw their own interpretations and understanding from the text (Creswell, 1998). I thus present my findings in complementary, but different ways in order to provide readers with the opportunity to make their own interpretations, but also to illustrate how I came to particular conclusions.

The following sequence of steps was followed in the research process (Creswell, 1998, p. 50-51):

1. I began with an objective set of experiences linked to the lives to be studied. I chose to use the school system in South Africa as a guide to structure time chronologically. For example, I encouraged the participants to speak about their experiences in relation to time periods linked to their journey in and out of school. The time prior to and after dropping out of school was explored. The

developmental stages in the life course were used to loosely guide the interview process.

2. The emphasis during interviews was on generating the participants' stories. The participants were guided to recount a set of life experiences in the form of a story or narrative. Thus "concrete, contextual biographical materials" (Creswell, 1998, p. 50) were gathered.
3. Narrative analysis was used to organise and understand the stories being told. The stories were organised around particular plots to construct a coherent research story illustrating the participants' occupational participation over time.
4. The meaning of the stories was explored. I relied on the participants for their interpretation of their stories. I searched for multiple meanings during the process of interpretation.
5. Finally, my interpretation of the life experiences of the individuals being studied is presented in this thesis. My interpretation focuses on the participants' occupational participation and the various factors that shape it.

In the following sections of this chapter I describe in detail the various aspects of the research process. It is important to note, however, that the methodology involved a reflexive and iterative process (Kathard, 2003). Thus, although participant selection, data generation, data analysis and interpretation are discussed separately, these processes happened simultaneously as I moved between the various processes whilst conducting the research.

3.3 Preparation for engaging with the biographical research process

In order to prepare myself to engage with the biographical research process, I considered the following aspects (Creswell, 1998):

- First and foremost I needed to bring myself into the narrative. In order to do this, I needed to acknowledge my own experience and standpoint throughout the research process and in the construction of the final research report (See Appendix A).
- I needed to collect extensive information about the participants of the research in order to understand their stories. This happened through a collaborative

process with the participants during data generation. It also came about as a result of prolonged engagement with the participants since I was connected to them or their families through my work as an occupational therapist in Lavender Hill.

- The multilayered context (Creswell, 1998) of the participants' lives was explored in order to fully uncover their occupational participation across time. This happened throughout data generation by being constantly aware of the need to ensure this occurred. I listened and re-listened to the interview recordings, which prepared me to engage further with the participants during subsequent interviews and to tease out the multiple layers associated with their life stories.
- In order to position the participants within wider society, I developed an understanding of historical and contextual material. My understanding of contextual issues has come about as a result of my work in the community of Lavender Hill over the past 6 years, as well as through additional reading and dialogue with peers to understand the participants' historical context.

3.4 Selection of participants

This research focuses on men in Lavender Hill. The participants for this study thus needed to be drawn from this community. The community of Lavender Hill remains marginalised despite South Africa's emergence from Apartheid. Using this community as the study population was therefore appropriate as I wanted to access those life stories that had previously remained untold, in accordance with the goals of biographical methodology (Plummer, 1983 in Creswell, 1998). I also feel that understanding the lives of those in disadvantaged communities, and the conditions which surround their participation before and after dropping out of school, is an important aspect for occupational therapists to consider in terms of issues of transformation in South Africa and the possible interventions that may be offered in such communities.

Purposive sampling was selected as the most appropriate strategy for finding information-rich individuals suitable for participation in this study (Cresswell, 1998). I needed to find participants who had dropped out of school at different ages and who might have participated differently both prior to and after this event. The best way to go

about doing this was through a process of snowballing. Snowballing enabled me to speak with people in order to find other people who may themselves be suitable candidates or who may know others who could be potential participants.

Previous contact with individuals in the community of Lavender Hill allowed me to access key informants who were able to direct me to people who would be able to offer different perspectives to this research. This was in accordance with the necessity of attaining a varied sample for the study, so that different life stories could be used to understand the phenomenon. This method of sampling allowed me to take advantage of new leads and to move with the unexpected. Initially, I used a set of selection criteria that assisted me in finding suitable candidates. However, during the participant selection and data generation process, which happened simultaneously, I found this preconceived set of criteria to be constraining. I found that I needed to consider the selection of each participant in turn. As each new participant's life-story emerged, I was able to gauge more effectively the different kinds of stories I was still looking for. However, given the scope of this research project, I needed to bear in mind the necessity of all the participants being men and residing in the same context. The other issue that required consideration was the participants' ages. I wanted to access stories that would allow a glimpse into the trajectory of occupational participation once men had decided to drop out of school. In order to do this, my participants needed to have had time for this trajectory to unfold. I was cognisant of the fact that the participants needed to be able to reflect on their decision to leave school and their participation in light of this decision. My previous experience working with adolescents had indicated that most of them were not able to do this. It has also been illustrated elsewhere that the perceived influence of certain life choices often only becomes apparent when people reach adulthood (Hagan, 1997). This meant that one of the key criteria for selection was that the participants needed to be at least 20 years or older.

The age at which the participants chose to leave school was initially offered as an important criterion when considering who should participate in the study. However, as the process unfolded it was thought to be less important than the story that a potential participant had to tell. I therefore revised the initial criterion that participants should all have dropped out of school after the compulsory education phase in the South African schooling system, as I felt that any man in Lavender Hill who had dropped out of school

at any stage would be able to offer a perspective on occupational participation which would assist in building an understanding of this phenomenon.

There were, however, two critical selection criteria that remained throughout the process. These were as follows:

- The participants selected for participation in the study needed to be capable of telling, and have insight into, their own stories. Men with pathology that causes impairment of insight were therefore not selected to participate. Key informants were relied upon to provide me with the necessary information to judge the story-telling ability of the potential participant. Where key informants themselves became participants in the study, I already had an in-depth knowledge of their potential story-telling ability due to previous contact and engagement with them on an on-going basis.
- The participants needed to be able to share their stories in a language with which they were comfortable. I felt this to be of crucial importance, because language plays an important role in giving coherence to a life story and is the product of cultural conventions (Plummer, 2001). It was thus essential for me to be able to communicate with the participants in their first languages during data generation and to understand the way in which language played a role in how the story was told and understood from the participants' perspectives. I was fortunate to encounter appropriate participants for this study who spoke either English or Afrikaans as their first language. Since I was able to engage fluently in either of these languages, it meant that the data generation process was not hampered. However, if an appropriate participant had been presented who spoke a language other than English or Afrikaans, I would have trained an assistant to assist with the data generation process, whilst bearing in mind the limitations that this presented.

As mentioned previously, I sought to attain a varied sample. Maximum variation sampling was therefore used as a core selection strategy. As a researcher I wanted to "document diverse variations" as well as identify "important common patterns" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 28) in the occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school. I therefore looked for participants who all complied with the

selection criteria mentioned above, but whose stories had the potential to show diverse variations by virtue of the information given by key informants. The dimensions of variation that I felt were of relevance in this study were the age of the participants, their current social positions, and their current and past involvement in daily life as described by the key informants. My own interpretation of a participant's ability to be successful or unsuccessful in life thus far was also a key aspect of variation. Three participants were selected to participate based on the scope of the study. The participants' biographical profiles are represented in Table 1 in Chapter 4. This was an appropriate number of participants to achieve the research objectives. Selecting three participants was also conducive to the study, since it involved the generation of extensive and in-depth data.

I found it increasingly complex to vary the sample as the data generation progressed. This was because it was not possible to ask about the whole of a person's life or to know details that may vary the sample from simple day-to-day contact with key informants or potential participants. I often only knew about the details of variation once I was well into the data generation process with a particular participant. My strategy became to only select another participant once I had finished the process of generating a life story account with a previous participant. This assisted me in knowing how to possibly vary the sample further and what questions I needed to ask when exploring the feasibility of including a potential participant. I remained open to exploring new and unexpected leads through this process. This ensured that I attained a sample that was at once similar and different. All participants lived in Lavender Hill and were coloured men, but displayed differences in their work status and schooling histories. Figure 1 represents how the entire process of participant selection occurred and the time frame under which this happened. Pseudonyms for the participants are applied in order to protect their identity.

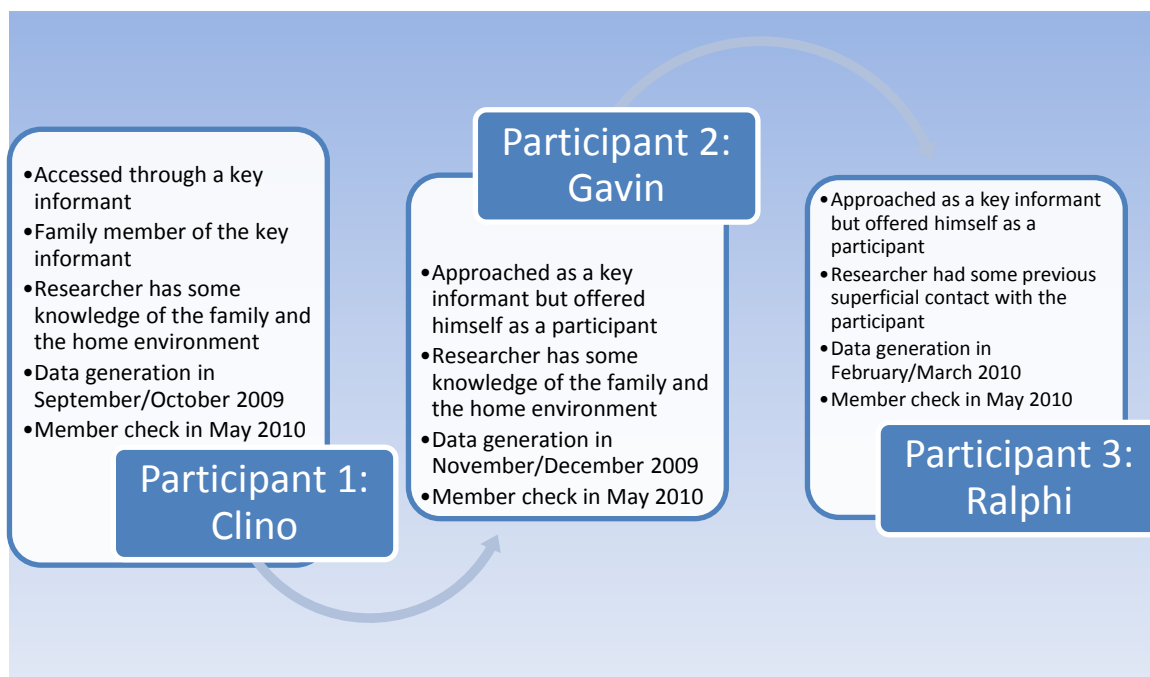


FIGURE 1: THE PROCESS OF PARTICIPANT SELECTION

The principle of data saturation was not applied in its traditional sense since the biographical method seeks to tell stories that need to be told and does not apply the principle of representativeness uniformly (Plummer, 2001). Together with my supervisor, who acted in the capacity of a peer reviewer, I determined when enough data had been generated in order to meet the aim of the study. Once I had collected the life stories of three participants, I felt that the data was sufficient as a starting point. Since the purpose of biographical research is to *suggest* possible interpretations of the phenomenon under study (Plummer, 2001), this was appropriate.

3.5 Data generation

Short, topical life stories were generated as data. This type of data was well suited to answering the research question, given the scope of the study. Short, topical life stories are abridged versions of long life stories. Their generation took less time and focused on particular events in the participants' lives (Plummer, 2001) in order to illuminate their occupational participation at different points across the lifespan.

The life-story interview was used as the data generation method. I chose Atkinson's (1998) approach to the life-story interview and supplemented this approach with other techniques that would enable the construction of data to occur in the best way possible. I spent a total of three to four hours with each participant over three sessions in order

to generate the data. I then spent a further hour with each participant that enabled me to check my interpretation of the data and the veracity of the research story. As seen in Figure 1 above, I had an already established relationship with Gavin and Ralph and an association with Clino's family. These previous ties with the participants assisted in building the trust required to share openly during the interview process. I found that I was constantly surprised by all my participants' willingness to be open and honest in sharing their stories. I did, however, find that the participants tended to speak in a chronology regarding events that had emerged during their lives and required my assistance in exploring particular areas of their occupational participation further. The biographical approach necessitated that the personal, temporal and social layers associated with the participants' participation were probed sufficiently. Due to this fact, I had to be particularly mindful of the way in which stories are constructed using an interpretive lens. I used Plummer's (1990 in Plummer, 2001) social action story process to understand how my own questions and comments during the interview might have been contributing to the data that was generated. I was cautious regarding this and used the opportunity to reflect substantially on the way in which my contributions shaped the separate interview processes. I used these reflections alongside the data that was generated in deepening the analysis process which sharpened my interpretation.

I was flexible in my approach throughout data generation (Atkinson, 1998). I constructed and directed each participant's interviews differently in accordance with each participant's unique style regarding what they chose to share. Interviews were thus participant-led. Sessions were structured so that they followed on from previous sessions and built on themes that had emerged previously.

3.5.1 Key aspects considered when conducting the interview process

I considered the following guidelines and their application with all the participants during the conduction of the life-story interview. These guidelines were based on those provided by Atkinson (1998), which he presents as the best proposed methods to conduct a life-story interview effectively. Additionally, I considered Kline's (1999) methodology for creating a thinking environment for participants to enable them to think with clarity and brilliance during the sharing of their life stories.

The guidelines I applied are elaborated on below.

1. *It was imperative to create the right setting for each interview with each participant.*

This was considered predominantly in terms of the venue that was selected for the interview. A space that was appropriate for both me and each respective participant was chosen through a negotiated process (Atkinson, 1998). The place varied from participant to participant, but the venue was always free from interruptions for the most part. I also considered that each participant's internal state was taken care of (Kline, 1999) by ensuring that the venue was comfortable and that the participant was offered refreshments where this was a possibility.

2. *It was essential to be a critical guide in the process of generating the participants' stories.*

I gave much consideration to how I could invite the participants to share their experiences as stories rather than as reports. Data generation happened over a period of 5-6 weeks with each participant, which enabled them to become engaged in the process as well as giving me time to consider how to continue eliciting the participant's story.

Throughout each interview I remained with how the participant chose to direct the process. Although it was difficult not to interrupt, I held back and allowed the participants to continue so that the process could unfold. I chose to be a "coaxer, coach and coercer" (Plummer, 2001, p. 42) at times. I was cautious, however, not to stunt the process by bombarding the participant with too many questions. I found that it was particularly helpful to allow for silence during the interviews (Kline, 1999), so that participants shared their experiences in more depth. Participants were respectfully and gently coaxed back on course (Atkinson, 1998) when this was necessary. Simple and direct questions were used at appropriate times that got to the heart of the experience or the meaning behind it (Atkinson, 1998).

3. *An open-ended interview was used.*

I used a “stream of consciousness approach” (Atkinson, 1998, p. 31) during each interview. This allowed the participant to hold the floor for as long as was possible. The questions I prepared prior to each interview were only used if and when necessary.

4. *Flexibility and responsiveness were key features.*

It was important for me to switch to being a follower at particular points in each interview session (Atkinson, 1998). I did this by following each participant’s train of thought, enabling him to really get at what he wanted to share. I used genuine facial expressions and gestures to encourage this. The interviews were conducted using both English and Afrikaans and I moved with the language the participant chose to share in. People living on the Cape Flats in Cape Town most often speak a particular dialect of Afrikaans. Although this dialect was familiar to me, certain phrases and expressions still required clarification. I therefore asked for this without hampering the flow of the interview.

3.5.2 Lessons learnt from data generation with the first participant

I used the data generation process with Clino (participant 1) as a pilot study to assist me in coming to know the methodology and to be more critical in my approach. This was necessary due to my inexperience in the use of biography as a research method. I adapted my approach between each interview session with Clino and then made adaptations to the way in which I structured the process before I engaged with Gavin (participant 2). I thought that I could enter the data generation process with a generic set of semi-structured questions (Appendix B), but then found that this was not suitable for this kind of research, due to the way in which the participants chose to share their life stories. I also based the selection of questions for the first interview with each participant on what I had learnt about them during an initial conversation prior to formal data collection. I found that this had worked well when engaging with Clino.

I learnt during data generation with Clino how easy it was to get ‘lost’ during the data generation phase and that essentially the participants are the leaders in the process. I learnt to trust a participant’s knowledge of their own lives and what they felt was relevant to share in light of the topic for the research. At times I felt that we might have

been going off on a tangent during the interview and had to contain my need to direct the interview too stringently. I learnt to focus on key aspects after the participant had shared the 'fullness' of a particular experience of occupational participation. I applied the lessons I learnt from each interview with a participant in subsequent interviews, as well as with new participants when I began the process.

3.5.3 Data Capture

All of the life-story interviews were audio-taped using an Olympus VN-3500PC digital voice recorder. They were transcribed verbatim together with my comments and questions in the text. Transcription took place after each interview in order to begin the analytical process while data generation was still occurring. The individual who transcribed the data was familiar with the Cape Flats dialect of Afrikaans as well as the culture on the Cape Flats. This assisted the interpretive process as she offered her own opinion regarding issues that were highlighted by participants during each interview. Due to logistical reasons, transcripts were not always complete before subsequent interviews. Where transcripts were not immediately available, I chose to listen to prior interviews in order to prepare appropriately for the follow-on interview. This method of preparation was appropriate as it allowed me to begin to uncover core themes within the stories being told as well as raising further questions to uncover deeper meaning in forthcoming interview sessions (Atkinson, 1998).

In order to capture the emotional expression of the participant, I reflected on the interview immediately after it occurred, capturing a detailed description of the interview session and the way in which the participant told their story. This was used during data analysis as a way of enhancing the credibility of the findings (Plummer, 2001). The reflective journal was also used as a vehicle to uncover my own standpoint as it related to the research process. This provided an opportunity to be reflexive that began prior to and continued throughout data generation and analysis. Uncovering my own standpoint involved working critically through my own assumptions and beliefs, attempting to understand how they came about (Kathard, 2009) as well as how they influenced the research process.

I am mindful of the fact that the biographies presented in the next chapter as research stories are incomplete. The participants' stories continue and are ever-unfolding

(Plummer, 2001). Thus it is important to keep in mind that generation of data at another point in time might have resulted in the participants telling very different stories, given the issues that they faced at that particular point in time. This should be kept in mind when reading the findings in chapters 4 and 5.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

The data was analysed and interpreted through a series of rigorous processes. I used Kathard's (2003) understanding of how to conduct an analysis of biographical data. The process is represented in Figure 2 on the following page.

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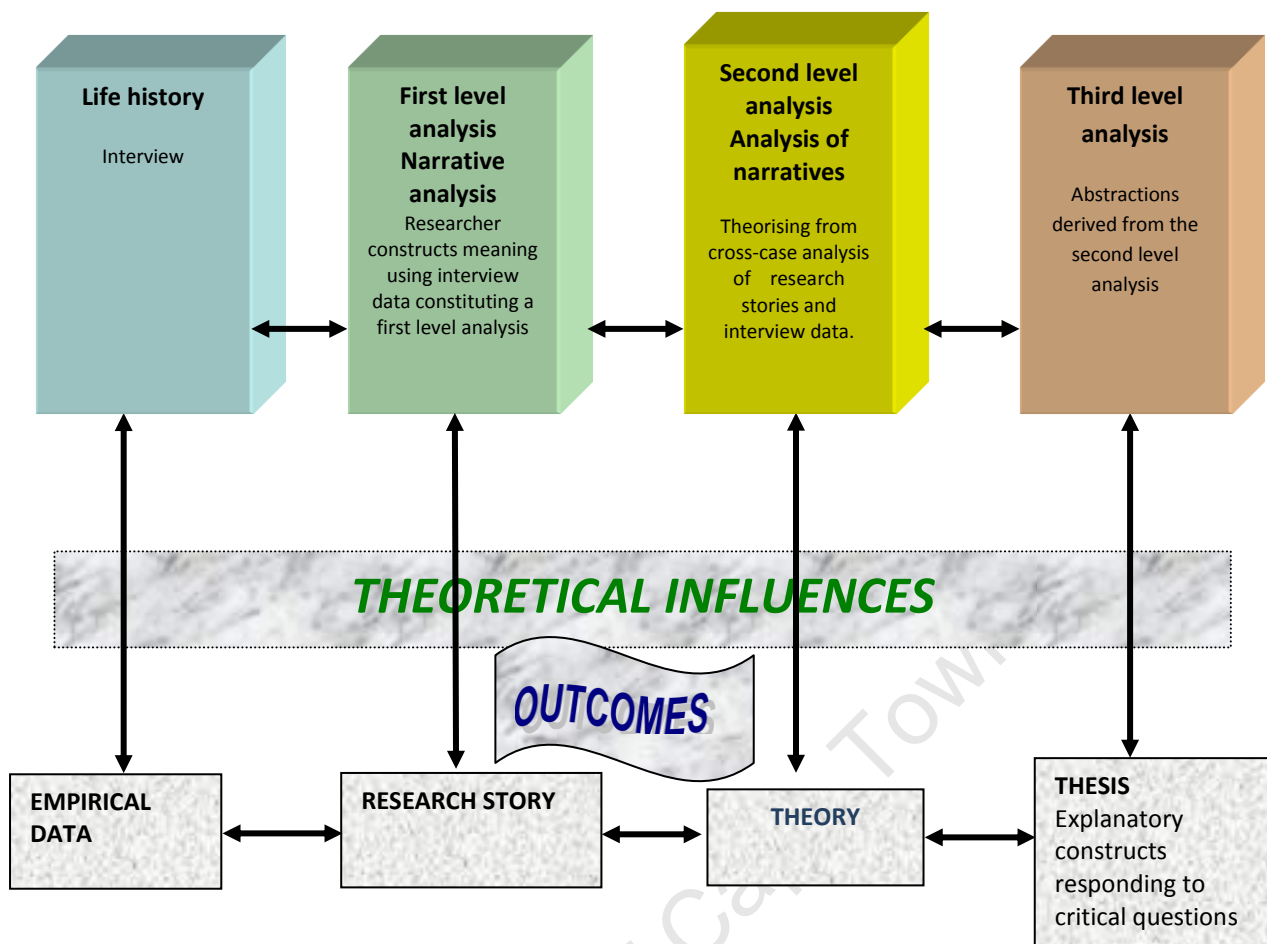


FIGURE 2: INTERACTIONS: LEVELS OF ANALYSIS, THEORETICAL INFLUENCES AND OUTCOMES (Taken from: Kathard, 2003, p. 105)

Kathard's (2003) view of the process reinforces the way in which the researcher moves between and through different levels of the analysis in order to eventually present the research findings in a format that is scientifically sound. I used this as a guiding influence in the way in which I analysed and (re)presented the findings of this research study.

3.6.1 First Level Analysis: Narrative analysis and the generation of research stories

The biographical method involves using the data generated in order to construct each participant's biography. The biography is (re)presented as a research story for the purposes of meeting the aim and objectives of the research.

Narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995) was used in order to generate a first level analysis of the data. Using narrative analysis as the first step in the analytical process would enable my audience to understand how and why I had come to particular

interpretations and conclusions about the occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school.

The first level analysis involved constructing the data in such a way so as to allow me to make sense of the events and their meanings as told to me by the participants (Czarniawska, 2004). In selecting data to include in the research stories, I was attempting to provide a thick description of the participants' occupational participation both prior to and after dropping out of school. This was in keeping with attempting to describe the nature of this participation. In order to do this, I needed to include what the participants' occupational participation consisted of, as well as the factors impacting on their participation. The meaning and significance that they attributed to the situations that had constituted their lives was also of importance. The process of selecting which data to include in the research stories was guided by the concept of emplotment (Czarniawska, 2004), which resulted in lifelike accounts of the participants' occupational participation being portrayed through the configured research stories presented in Chapter 4.

Emplotment involved searching for plots within the raw data surrounding the occupational participation of the participants using the objectives of the research as a guide. Through this process, I constructed characters, emphasised events and actions, and developed an interpretative theme (Ryan, 1993 in Czarniawska, 2004, p. 125). I attended to the temporal aspects as well as the interaction of elements in each story, whilst concurrently highlighting the inherent diversities (Polkinghorne, 1995). The strategies of emplotment were used in a convoluted manner (Czarniawska, 2004), reinforcing the iterative nature of the entire analytic process. Thus, the outcome of each strategy consistently influenced the outcome of the other strategies used, whilst generating the research story. The process of emplotment enabled the construction of a coherent whole that reflected the total life experience of the participants with regard to their occupational participation across time. The challenge as a researcher was to present the inconsistencies in the story within this coherent structure (Polkinghorne, 1995). This served to highlight the complexities associated with the phenomenon being explored. The entire process of emplotment informed the second level analysis.

In constructing the research stories, I faced the dilemma of bringing to the text the participants' unique styles of speaking and engaging. This was challenging given my vastly different background and inexperience in writing a biographical account. In essence, I have attempted to capture the participants' uniqueness in what I offer as each individual story. I have chosen to present the stories as first-person narratives, as I felt that this made the stories more lifelike. Since the research stories are constructed in English, I have tried to incorporate some of the participants' own language and communication styles in certain parts of the text in order to give the reader a sense of who each participant is. I felt that this served the research process well in that the participants were able to recognise the research stories as their own during the process of correspondence (see 3.7).

3.6.2 Second and third level analyses: Analysis of narratives and the generation of explanatory constructs

Once the first level analysis was complete, I conducted an analysis of the participants' narratives. This constituted the second level of data analysis. The second level analysis drew on the interpretations made in the research stories and analysed the plots of the stories to understand how they constructed the whole. The third level analysis, presented in this thesis in the form of a discussion in Chapter 6, pulls together the first and second level analyses in order to provide an explanation for why the narratives appear as they do. It also offers a suggestion regarding the reasons for the nature of the occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school. The third level analysis thus responds to the critical research question and ensures that the aim of the research has been met.

The second level analysis involved moving between the generated research stories and the interview data in order to conduct an inductive analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). Thus the outcomes of this analysis involved locating common themes across the different research stories as they sat in conversation with one another. The use of an inductive approach allowed me to consider multiple interpretations of the data (Thomas, 2003), a key element of conducting an interpretive biographical study (Denzin, 1989). I also used elements of cross-case analysis (Cresswell, 1998) in that I treated each biography as a single case and then analysed across cases to generate core categories to explain the

phenomenon being explored. This enabled the development of a deeper understanding through the process of determining the similarities and differences across the three research stories.

In order to generate common categories and themes, I used a coding process based on Cresswell's work (Cresswell, 2002). However, instead of simply identifying segments of information in the raw interview data, I searched for instances of participation within the research stories, previously referred to as plots. I then interpreted these instances of participation in light of the various personal, social and temporal factors that might have influenced them in either positive or negative ways. This interpretation was then placed in the story as a whole, by viewing it as part of the larger story over the course of time, offering an explanation for why things look as they do. This constituted the third level analysis and gave credibility to the research findings. I thus moved from 'instances'/codes to sub-categories and from sub-categories to core categories (Cresswell, 2002). The categories and their interaction were then presented as part of an overarching theme.

While what is presented in chapters 5 and 6 may have relevance for understanding the nature of occupational participation for men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school, I wish to reinforce that the purpose of biographical research is to **suggest** possible understandings of a phenomenon and not to generalise to multiple cases and contexts (Plummer, 2001). As such, what I offer in Chapter 6 is one interpretation of the data that was generated. I acknowledge that other interpretations do exist and that the reader is free to make their own interpretations.

3.7 Achieving fidelity

Traditional ways of seeking truth in interpretive research do not apply (Denzin, 1989). Riessman (1993) illustrates that "there is no canonical approach in interpretive work, no recipes and formulas, and different validation procedures may be better suited to some research problems than to others" (p. 69). As a researcher, I needed to be cognisant of the trustworthiness of the data in order to ensure the credibility of the findings that are presented in this thesis. In this section I present the measures that were used to achieve a sense of fidelity (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995) within the research process and in the construction of the research stories and their interpretation.

The biographical method seeks the insider's viewpoint on the life being told and not the objective truth (Atkinson, 1998). Transferability was therefore not a criterion that was sought. Traditional forms of data triangulation did not apply. Ascertaining the participants' personal truths meant that their perspectives were most important and obtaining other people's perspectives on the participants' lives was irrelevant. Taking this into account, I acknowledge that all life stories are self-stories that involve the teller reconstructing himself as a result of telling particular parts of their story (Denzin, 1989). The story, in and of itself, would not have existed without the data generation process which brings into question the veracity of the account as representative of real existence. I acknowledge this as a limitation, but also as one that is impossible to overcome. In a sense, it is a limitation that applies to all research that relies on personal accounts, since it is through language that people construct their reality (Denzin, 1989) in interaction with others.

In attempting to achieve fidelity in the research process, I used the following methods:

- A reflexive journal was kept throughout the research process. This allowed me to keep a record of my anxieties and worries about the research as well as my changing personal impressions of the participant and of the situation. It also allowed me to take account of my own personal position in the social world (Plummer, 2001, p. 152). This was a necessity given the interpretive orientation of this research.
- An audit trail involved detailing the research process systematically throughout so that others are able to follow how the study was conducted from a methodological standpoint (De Poy & Gitlin, 1998). This added credibility to the study in terms of illustrating the decisions taken by the researcher and their impact on the research process. The trail illustrated the sampling process and why certain participants were selected; the process of obtaining informed consent; how data was collected; how analysis informed data generation; how data analysis was performed; how member checking occurred; and how reflexive procedures informed the interpretive process.
- Peer debriefing meant that more than one researcher was involved in the research process. The research supervisors acted as second and third researchers. There was thus continued reflection on alternative views.

In order to establish the credibility of the research stories and the second and third level analyses, I used the following mechanisms:

1. Tracking internal consistency in the participants' accounts

The participants' accounts of their stories displayed consistency between the past, present and future, despite the inconsistencies that are acknowledged to exist in life (Atkinson, 1998). I constantly ensured that what was said in one part of the story did not contradict what was said in another part. I also ensured that what was selected as data to be (re)presented in the research story echoed the participants' experiences (Blumfeld-Jones, 1995) and enhanced understanding of their occupational participation. Culture and cultural meanings, which are often considered to be external to the person, were considered as part of the life being told and as the very things that make the life what it is (Denzin, 1989). Understanding these aspects was thus crucial in determining consistency between how the participants acted and the conditions under which they constructed their life stories (Polkinghorne, 1995).

2. The principle of persuasion and plausibility as a measure of believability

The interpretations of the findings are considered to be "reasonable and convincing" (Riessman, 1993, p. 65) since it is felt that both the research stories and the second level analysis demonstrate what Blumfeld-Jones (1995) refers to as believability. The research stories thus reflect believable possibilities for the occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school. My prolonged engagement with participants also served to consolidate the believability of the research stories that I (re)present in Chapter 4. Alternative interpretations were considered during the second and third level analyses to ensure credibility. Relevant theory is used to make sense of the participants' accounts (Riessman, 1993), further establishing their believability.

3. The principle of correspondence as member checking

This was applied through the process of collaborating with the participants as the co-interpreters of the research stories. The initial draft of each configured story was taken back to each participant (Riessman, 1993). The participants had the opportunity to make changes as they saw fit and if they so wished. This process is commonly referred to as member checking in qualitative research. I chose to read participants their stories so that they had an opportunity to both see and hear my interpretations. This was

helpful because some of the participants could not read English well and doing so thus served to overcome any barriers in the form of illiteracy. During the process of correspondence, all participants acknowledged the power of the research story in communicating the experience of their lives. All three participants agreed with the interpretations that I had made. One participant exclaimed “that’s me!” when he heard his story. All of the participants felt that the style of writing captured their identity in the story and they were able to recognise their voices. The participants gave me their permission to perform minor edits to the research stories subsequent to my final meeting with them.

4. *The principle of coherence offered an opportunity to evaluate the research findings*

Riessman (1993) illustrates that the data should have global, local and themal coherence. In order for the findings to be credible coherence needed to be as “thick” as possible (Riesman, 1993, p. 67) and show all three aspects. This is similar to what would traditionally be described as dependability of the findings. What emerged in the telling and writing of this thesis was closely aligned with the research objectives (Riesman, 1993), establishing global coherence. I used different literary devices in the research stories to ensure that the meaning of what the participants said was communicated effectively. This enabled the achievement of local coherence (Riesman, 1993). Themal coherence was achieved through ensuring that there was significant evidence in the interview text for what is presented as the core categories and overarching theme in the research findings (Riesman, 1993).

3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Cape Town Human Ethics Research Committee. I upheld the ethical principles of autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999) during the study.

3.7.1 Autonomy

Autonomy of research participants was respected in terms of their right to consent to participate in the study. Full informed consent was obtained from all of the participants who agreed to participate. Consent was voluntary and the participants received a full and clear explanation of the research study in an information sheet which excluded academic jargon (Appendix C). The participants were required to complete and sign the

required consent form (Appendix D). Consent forms and information sheets were translated into Afrikaans as this was the first language of the participants (Appendix E). This ensured a full understanding of the study and the consent process. The consent form and information sheet was read with and explained to each participant. After concluding this process, I was certain that the participants understood what they were consenting to. I made certain that no participant felt obligated to participate as a result of being selected by a key informant or because they were personally known to me. I emphasised the participants' right to refuse to participate to the key informants and prospective participants. The right to withdraw from the study at any point, without negative effect, was emphasised verbally and in the consent form. I made myself available to answer any questions related to the research when obtaining informed consent and once the research process had begun.

3.7.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality of the research participants was maintained at all times. The obligation to protect the participants' identities was stated clearly in the informed consent form.

Since a key informant was involved in the identification of one of the participants, I made sure that this individual understood that none of the information that this particular participant shared with the researcher would be shared with her. The participants' anonymity is maintained in this thesis. I had to think carefully about the way in which the research stories were constructed, as it would be easy to identify the participants, since the stories provide full descriptions of their lives. I collaborated with the participants in changing names and certain minor details in their stories which would assist in ensuring their identity remained confidential. However, it may still be possible for people who are familiar with the participants to identify them through their stories, since it is impossible to change certain details which could compromise the research findings. This needs to be borne in mind in the dissemination of the findings when this is done with individuals associated with Lavender Hill. In any subsequent publications related to the research, great care will be taken to ensure that none of the participants' details that reveal their identity will be included.

The participants were told how the data would be recorded, stored and processed. Raw data stored in hard copy and electronically was secure and only the researcher and

research supervisors had access to it. It will continue to be stored securely upon completion of this thesis.

3.7.3 Ethics associated with the biographical method: promoting non-maleficence and beneficence for research participants

Atkinson (1998) cautions those who use life stories in research to consider the nature of the research that is being undertaken and the associated ethical implications. One of the most important considerations in biographical research is the fact that the stories are owned by those who tell them. I therefore have no right to copyright material in my own name and will uphold this principle if publishing becomes a possibility. Atkinson (1998) outlines a set of ethical principles that must be taken into account by researchers who are making use of the biographical method (Spradley, 1979 in Atkinson 1998, p. 37). The following principles were followed:

1. The participant was always considered first when choices needed to be made. For example, the negotiation of time frames, venues for data generation and preferences for how the research story would be structured were negotiated with the participants, prioritising their needs and desires.
2. The participant's rights were protected at all costs. The participants had the right to determine whether or not they wanted their names published in this thesis. When one participant felt that he wanted to reveal his actual identity in his research story, I engaged in substantial negotiation with him regarding this. I felt in this case that he might be compromised through doing this since he formed part of a marginalised group and also would not know how he might feel about it at a later point in time when it would be too late to change what had been done. Through a collaborative process we concluded that his identity should not be revealed.
3. Objectives of this research were clear and transparent at the initiation of the data generation process. I took great care in explaining the purpose of the research and its goals to the participants. I offered them extensive opportunities to engage in dialogue with me regarding the objectives.

The use of the life-story interview as a data collection method has been shown to have a number of benefits (Atkinson, 1998). The benefits for the participants in this study included one or more of the following:

- A clearer perspective on personal experiences, bringing greater meaning to how past actions were understood.
- The opportunity to share valued experiences and insights with others.
- Satisfaction and joy through surveying what they had achieved from a coherent and structured account of their lives.
- An opportunity was provided for validating personal experience through the process of participants sharing their life stories and having their biographies read back to them.
- Life was seen more clearly or differently, which provided the inspiration to change where the participants felt this was necessary. Each participant was provided with a copy of their own biography. This provided them with the opportunity to continue with the reflective process that had begun for them during the data-generation phase.

All costs related to the research were borne by me and did not inconvenience participants in any way. I was flexible in arranging times for interviews that were convenient for the participants and that did not disadvantage them. Where participants chose to be interviewed at their place of employment, they negotiated with their supervisors regarding this.

I uphold the rights of the participants in honouring their views and perspectives in reporting the research findings in subsequent chapters. However, as a researcher, I had a particular interest in their occupational participation and this was therefore the focus in the findings. As mentioned previously, all of the participants appeared comfortable with the way in which their lives had been (re)presented. I did not fabricate or manipulate data in order to obscure the findings and I point out the limitations of these in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH STORIES

In this chapter I present the research stories, which constitute the first level analysis. Each entire constructed story is (re)presented so that the reader is able to develop an understanding of how a participant's occupational participation unfolded over time, as well as how it fitted in to the full scope of his life as he recalled it. The second and third level analyses follow in subsequent chapters. The presentation of the research stories intends to provide the reader with a sense of how I came to the particular insights that are presented in chapters 5 and 6. The research stories have been constructed to (re)present the participants' realities. As a result of this, they do not reflect exactly what was said. Rather, they are an interpretation of the participants' stories that reveals their occupational participation across time. I introduce the participants in Table 1, which indicates their biographical profiles and variations.

TABLE 1: BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Age (at time of initiating data collection)	Race	Geographical location	Place of schooling	Grade in which participant decided to leave school	Highest grade attained	Current work occupation
Clino	29 years	Coloured	Lavender Hill	Mitchell's Plain; Retreat	Grade 11	Grade 10	Unemployed at the time of data collection; is periodically engaged in contract work
Gavin	49 years	Coloured	Lavender Hill/Seawinds	Retreat	Grade 6	Grade 6	Pastor
Ralphi	38 years	Coloured	Lavender Hill	Lavender Hill	Grade 10	Grade 9	Groundsman

The influence of Lavender Hill and the South African context are emphasised in the research stories. The reader is requested to pay attention to the way in which this context shaped the participants' occupational trajectories. Throughout their lives, the

participants engaged in ways that were historically-sanctioned and socially acceptable. Since this study focuses on occupational participation in relation to school dropout, the social disorganisation of the school and community context is thought to play a vital role in influencing occupational participation. It is important to note that participants elaborated on the process of dropping out of school because they were asked to. All three participants appeared to view themselves as ordinary men participating in daily life in Lavender Hill and this is what they chose to focus on in sharing their stories. This adds credence to the perspective that dropping out of school manifests as a process and does not have relevance as a personally significant event for the participants. The context of participation across time is therefore thought to cement particular ways of participating, playing a crucial and more important role in the participants' lives than the mere act of choosing not to continue with school. However, as a researcher, I interpret that dropping out of school contributes in certain ways to the experiential context of the research stories.

Although the research stories also demonstrate the possibility for changes in occupational participation at different points in the participants' lives, the context of participation plays a central role in shaping both the possibilities for change and the outcome of change. The context of Lavender Hill has been highlighted in Chapter 1 as it is impossible to tell the stories of the participants without considering the story of Lavender Hill.

Although the research stories could be read in any order, I have chosen to order them sequentially according to the degree of change that the participants' occupational trajectories undergo. I begin with Clino's story, which demonstrates an occupational trajectory with little change. I then move on to Ralph's story, which demonstrates opportunities for change in relation to contextual factors. Lastly, Gavin's story is presented. It presents an opportunity to reflect on the substantial change in occupational trajectory that can occur when both personal and contextual factors are aligned in specific ways. This helps us to conceptualise some of the contextual constraints and opportunities, as well as the personal factors, which operate concurrently to influence the development of the participants' occupational trajectories over time.

The research stories are titled as follows:

Clino's story: You become what happens in the place you live

Ralphi's story: The luxury house, the 'burn', and the guardian

Gavin's story: A U-turn in the road to nowhere

University of Cape Town

Clino's Story

You become what happens in the place you live

You know, living in Lavender Hill is hard... dis swak *[it's terrible]*. You wouldn't know what it's like. You need to know to understand me and who I have become. There was a time in my life when I was getting ahead, when I was good at what I was doing. I wanted to get further. But sometimes people here are funny. They don't want you to get ahead. They don't want you to do better than them. I call it the "coloured mentality". Die next coloured likes nooit dat die next coloured moet slimmer dan hom wees nie *[the next coloured does not like it when the next coloured is cleverer than he is]*. Maar, is soos hulle sê dat as jy in a sekere plek bly dan jy hoot later al soos wat in daai plek gebeur, jy word so *[But it's like they say. If you live in a certain place then later you will become what happens in that place]*.

Ek weet nou nie hoekom it so issie, daai's net hoe os gemanufacture gewees het *[I don't know why it is this way, that's just the way we have been manufactured]*.

Would it be different if I moved out of Lavender Hill? Is it the place? Or the people in the place?

Here in Lavender Hill people have a "I don't care" attitude.

Promising beginnings

In Grade 7, my principal told me that I was one of the top six students. I had top marks. The people at Beaconsfield Primary saw potential that I could be something more. More than a tradesman. So I went into an academic programme at Olympia Secondary School. Olympia was seen as a good choice for high-achieving students.

These days I think about becoming a plumber, but not in those days! I had other stuff in my mind that time. I thought I could be something really great, but I realised after some time that maybe that wasn't meant to be. Back then I wanted to be an architect.

I'm really good at drawing lines and stuff like that. I asked my teacher what I needed to do to achieve my dream. He told me that I must study for five, maybe six years. I thought

“NO ways!” I didn’t have six years of my life to go and waste! What if I had gone to study, paid all that money, and things didn’t work out as planned? Who was going to support me when I studied anyway? What if I have to drop out, then what happens to me? Getting money for things is like drawing blood from a stone here. I decided to leave that dream alone; to sleep in peace.

These days I wonder if I made the right decision. I have looked at other guys who have papers [*qualifications*] and I see that it gets them places. Even if they don’t work in the field they studied, they still seem to get somewhere. I’ve learnt that papers take care of you and how people *see* you. But, back then, I was impatient and my mind was made up. Slowly I began to lose interest in my classes at school.

School gets hard

When I was 16 things got hard for me. When I tried to tell people about my difficulties, they didn’t listen to me. I told my mommy and my teacher. But how many times must you tell a person before they will hear you?

The maths was becoming so difficult for me that I thought to myself “I can’t do this anymore.” And the English! They used to drill me to speak English! Jeune [*gosh*], that was frustrating! In primary school, maths was only about numbers, but in high school they started with this X and Y stuff. They give me X and Y and tell me it must equal Z! I didn’t understand what they were talking about. If I don’t understand something, but you force me to be there and listen, then I switch off. I’ll sit there, but I won’t actually *do* anything. What I didn’t think about at the time was that there were people who could help me, but I just didn’t ask them. No one really seemed to care. School was a joke. Lots of the teachers were never in class.

I had other things I wanted to do anyway. In the end when it came time to go to English class, or Maths, then I decided my day was soema [*basically*] finished! I used to look at the class and then look at the school gate and my first choice was always the gate. I used to spin stories for my mommy and the other teachers. I used to tell them that the teacher left early or that the class went somewhere and I didn’t have money for it.

It didn’t seem like a big deal, but I do remember the day I decided to drop out of school. I was doing my last exams of grade 11 at Olimpia – I just had to write English and

Afrikaans. My father woke me up on that morning and just then I decided that I wasn't going to get up and go to school. Later my mom came to wake me again, but I told her I didn't want to go to school anymore. She didn't argue; told me I'd have to explain it to my father. When I did, he told me it was my decision. He said that I would not hold them responsible for what happened after I dropped out. I would be to blame for whatever happens in my life after that.

I was in charge of my own future.

An (un)usual suspect

I never thought I was one of those guys who would drop out of school. I knew who the usual suspects were for dropping out. Those ouens [guys] who would stand outside the classroom and smoke and other stuff. They were up to no good. They were selling drugs and were friends with the dealers. But I just found school hard. And I had other problems also, like my father needing help. I wanted to go work to help make the situation in the house better. At that time, my father was the only one supporting my mother, myself and my other two brothers and sister. The same thing used to happen in our house as used to happen in other houses in Lavender Hill. Your money comes in today and tomorrow there's nothing left! Things were tense at home because we had no money. I thought maybe if I went to work, I could make the situation better.

What big dreams I had... I didn't know it at the time, but I think that I used my situation as an excuse to drop out.

Returning against my will

The Christmas after I dropped out of school we went to my aunty's house and all of my father's family were there. My uncle is a professor and that day he called me aside to persuade me to go back to school – any school of my choice. He promised to pay my school fees and for my school clothes. He said he would give me the beating of my life if I didn't go back! His threat put a stop to any argument from me, but I wasn't really lus [keen] to try again. I chose to go back to Bridgewood because it was close to home and they accepted me there.

But things just repeated themselves. School work was hard. No one cared. I was thrown out of class on my first day after talking back to the teacher. It was then that I met

Morgan. He persuaded me to go around the corner and have a smoke with him. I told him that we were supposed to be standing outside the class, but he just shrugged and said that as long as the teacher has thrown us out we would make sure we were out. That was the start of Morgan and my friendship.

It was also the start of the smoking and drinking during school.

Every day after school we would spend the night drinking at Morgan's place. I would go to school half-drunk the next day. One day the principal found me sleeping in the sun outside the classroom. I told that ou [guy] he must go and tell his own children what to do – I'm not his child! He phoned my father and asked him to sort me out because he was tired of me bunking and being rude at school. He was so happy with himself for telling my father, but the joke was on him. I knew that I wouldn't get in any real trouble. It's like my dad said, I was in charge of my own future.

I decided to let school go and to leave for good. By that time, I had started to make my own rules. I had kwaai [cool] friends. They didn't care who you were, what you did, or what your job was. They did their own thing. It was important for me to do the same because I had to fit in there. I started to adapt to what they did and I began to change. I did more of the usual thing. Drinking. Smoking. Partying.

I didn't recognise my old self anymore.

A jack of all trades, a specialist of none

After I dropped out, I thought that if I could find a job, and then work my way up, then I would be sorted.

Things didn't work out that way. I found out that I was a different sort of person. I found out more about who I was during this time. I don't like people to tell me what to do. I don't like to take orders from people especially if I think I have a better idea.

The only work I could find when I left school was building work like carpentry, bricklaying, and painting. There were so many different jobs in the beginning that it is difficult to remember them all. I worked mostly for small companies at the start. I didn't really stay long at any of the jobs in the beginning of my working life. Some I stayed at for two days, some three. One carpentry job I had was for a longer time – five or six

months - and a plumbing job, that I really enjoyed, was for eight months. When I was working, I would hear from my friends that they were earning more for doing the same job somewhere else. I would think – no way am I going to work for this ouen [guy] for R90 a day when someone else is earning R150 a day for the same thing. This made me angry. I threw away some jobs because of this.

I used to find work by asking around when I saw people doing these jobs, or by asking friends who were working if they could ask their bosses for a job for me. One time my sister-in-law found me a painting job with the guy she worked for. But this guy – joh [gosh] – he was a funny man. The one day he tells me he is not happy with my painting, the next day he tells me he is. But he was paying me good money – R160 a day I think – so I thought I would stay. But it got too much with all his rules – get off his property by five, no using the toilet inside, work ‘til the last minute even if there’s nothing to do! He told me I was untrustworthy! I thought “go to hell man!” I couldn’t take the way he treated me.

There were others like him. Another boss who pretended to be nice at first, but really also had no manners. That ouen [guy] was rich and he offered to give me mechanical work even though I knew nothing about it. I got that job through my brother. That guy only paid me R45 a day. I asked him when he was going to pay me more. He told me that he would only give me more when I had learnt to do mechanical jobs on my own. So, I showed him I could do it but he didn’t like that. He started giving me kak [terrible] jobs like standing at the robot and handing out pamphlets to cars. I remember this guy in a Mercedes Compressor came by while I was standing there. I took a chance. Asked him if he had better work for me. He told me to write down my particulars and he would give me a phone call. After that, I went back and told my boss that I wasn’t going to work for him anymore!

The best job I ever had was at a place called Needles. I started at this job in 2001. My mommy knew a lady who worked at Needles. She told me to give her my CV [curriculum vitae] so that she could give it to the managers there. I took care to make my CV look good. I thought that maybe if I wrote it out in pen then they would see that I needed a job desperately. Lucky for me they looked at my CV and called me in for an interview. It was the highest paid job I have ever had in my life. I do not know what is next for me.

Needles was a knitting mill and I was involved in dyeing the fabric. I earned R4 500 a month when I worked there. The machines in the factory do most of the work, but I needed to make sure the dye was put in and that the machine was following the right steps. We needed to reset the computer if the machine made a mistake. I had to understand how the machines worked to do this. These two guys, Shaun and Henry, who were in my department, showed me briefly what to do. The rest I taught myself on the job. The supervisors sometimes asked me if I knew what to do in other departments and I told them that I did. The machines are the same, the fabric is just different. So, I learnt to fill in for people in other sections. I was the only one who could work in the kitchen, mix the dye, work on my machines, and do the jets! I could even do the work of the guy who dried the fabric. But no-one ever noticed or rewarded me.

One day I was suddenly called in for a hearing at Human Resources. The foreman was very disorganised and he didn't like it when you didn't do things his way so he had reported me. He told Human Resources that I didn't do my work well, that I was ill-disciplined and that I had refused duty. When I got to Human Resources, the manager asked me what I thought he should do with me. I skelled that guy out *[told him off]*. Told him that I am not paid the money, he is. I didn't need to do his job.

I hurt my back while I was at Needles, and whenever it got sore, the doctor would put me off for three days and give me tablets. At the hearing they told me I used to sleep on the job. I told them to go to the sick book and they would see the doctor's note there for every time I hurt my back. I explained about the medication that knocked me out because each time my back got sore again the doctor put me on stronger tablets. Surely it's obvious why I slept on the job? They wanted to know what I had to say about the refusal of duty. I told them that if I am a machine operator, how can I take a mop to the floor? That is not in my job description! They told me that it is in my job, but I told them that on my pay slip it says 'machine operator' not 'mop operator'. That was also a time in my life when I had just married my first wife and we had started taking tik³. They asked me: how would I feel if they fire me? I told them if they must fire me, they must fire me. They asked me if I would like my job back. I told them no! I don't want that job

³ Tik is the slang name for the stimulant drug methamphetamine (www.blaauwberg.net/cic/articles/drugs/tik.asp). This potent drug can be smoked, injected, snorted or injected and results in, amongst other things, irritability, aggression and a false sense of confidence or power (www.blaauwberg.net/cic/articles/drugs/tik.asp).

because as long as that supervisor is in charge, things will not change. I told them I would stay if they put me in another department, but they said I didn't have experience in the other departments! My contract was terminated. I miss the money I was earning now. Needles was my last permanent job.

Possibilities

There were times when I would just wait at home on other people to call me for work. Like that ouen [guy] I was speaking about who I met at the robots handing out pamphlets. I waited for two days for him to call and when he eventually did I jumped! He told me to meet him at the robots by Nando's in Grassy Park. When he picked me up we drove to his house and I was so impressed! This man had so much stuff! He was like my hero! I told that man that I could do all sorts of building work and he told me that he will pay me 'real' money as long as I do 'real' work for him. I told him it doesn't matter what he pays me as long as I get the job because I really wanted to work. He agreed to pay me R120 a day.

After a while, I started hearing things about this ouen [guy]. His cousin, who was working with me, told me things about this guy's terrible attitude. I couldn't believe it and I thought his cousin must be lying. I carried on working for this guy and I found out the hard way. One day I went to the toilet that was in his house and he asked me if I thought I was the boss the way I was walking round his house! I still went to work for the end of that week, but when it came to the following Monday, I was in for a surprise. When I went to wait by Nando's no one picked me up! Tuesday and Wednesday morning, it was the same thing! That guy knew that he didn't really need me, but I needed him. That made it easy for him to treat me poorly. Maybe this whole thing of finding work, and losing it this way, is a pattern for me. I'm not sure though...I don't know. I think that it might be the same for other people in Lavender Hill. My brother-in-law, who actually finished school, has told me stories about bosses he has worked for who do not treat him well. Coloured bosses! I guess it's true. A coloured is only used to do the dirty work for other people. That's the only thing people see him as good for.

Competition in the community

Besides the fact that I must deal with all of this, there was also the matter of competition. Competition with other coloured people. People you are working with, and

your boss, if he is also coloured. It's tiring man! It doesn't seem to happen if your boss is a white man. White people don't worry about that sort of thing.

It's like if I see one of the coloured guys I'm working with, or even one of my friends doing something, and I go to them and show them how to do it a better way, it will be a problem. That guy, or that girl, won't listen to me, and they won't want to look small because somebody else had a better idea, so they will ignore you. Often they won't even speak to you after that. They might not want to be your friend anymore either.

When other coloured people are in charge at a job, and you try to apply there, they can make it difficult for you. This one time I went to a company to ask for a job and the white guy sent out one of the coloured ouens [guys] to deal with me. When he heard I wanted a job, his whole face soema [basically] changed! He said there was nothing, but if something came up, he would phone me. He said it in a way that made me think "ja, right, this guy will never ever phone me".

Irresponsible and reckless, daai was ek [Irresponsible and reckless, there I was]

Sometimes I think that if I was more responsible I would have managed my money and my life better, but, joh [gosh], I was irresponsible sometimes! I did clubs, drugs and women! I partied a lot when I had work and when I didn't. It's normal for younger people to socialise and party and drink with older people in Lavender Hill. I used to sit and drink with older friends who were my father's age.

When I first stopped school, I partied with my friends. Some of them were also dropouts. There was a shebeen behind our kort [block of flats] that was owned by a white lady called Aunty Millie. I was friends with her son Elroy. They had a big bungalow in their backyard that was like a house! Children could play board games inside and there was also a pool table and a jukebox. At night, Elroy used to ask his mom for the key to the bungalow so we could shoot some pool. Some of the nights, we used to break the pool table to steal the money, and then buy a klomp [bunch of] beers and drink there 'til the morning with some girls. That was what my life was like during that time. I knew exactly what my plan was for each day, net drink, elke dag [just drinking, every day]!

We spent time at Elroy's house drinking with girls. When we finished drinking, each guy would take his girl where he wanted and then we would go sleep. We never really went

out in those days. It was when I started going to nightclubs that I really started to get reckless. I don't even want to think about that time. It's all bad memories man...

I remember this one time that I was going out with this girl called Mandy. I met her at a nightclub one night and she said she didn't have a lift home. At the nightclub, we saw the father of her child was there and he started causing trouble with her. I told him: if you want to perform with her, you must first ask me if you can perform with her! After this, he went to fetch his cousin and wanted to fight. So I told her that I am tired and I'm not going to fight. I just wanted to go home. She told me that I should just go home with her. When we got there, her mom made us leave. I told her the couch was fine for me, but she refused. She let us in the back door and out the front door and told us that the gangsters would not get us if walked home on the main road. Joh [gosh], I thought, it's three o' clock in the morning and you are putting us out your house! We walked around the corner, and my friend told me to whistle if I saw anything suspicious. I stood and waited for him, but I didn't know what he was doing. Next thing, he comes around the corner in a car! He had stolen one of the cars that was standing in front of Mandy's house with a telephone key! We rode that car around the whole night and came back at six o' clock in the morning where we parked the car in Lavender Hill. Later that day, we saw that someone had burnt it! Mandy broke up with me because she always suspected it was us who had stolen the car. I only admitted much later that it had been me.

There were times when I had five girlfriends at one time and in one place! Cameron, my friend, always said if they really knew who I was, they wouldn't want to know me at all. I was a 'smooth operator'! I felt really evil at times. I got myself into some difficult situations because of how I was with women. I once had an affair with a married woman. She used to come and fetch me in her car and we used to go and party and drink a bit in Fish Hoek. But eventually she got a bit weird and asked me to go with her to find her husband. She had three kids. I told her it was over... enough with that nonsense.

Love, marriage, and family

I met and married my first wife in 2004. I was married to her for two years. The drinking and drugging was part of our relationship. My mommy always said that a man becomes like his wife. I think she was telling the truth. She always told me that that woman would take me to the gutters. The one morning I got up and looked in the

mirror. I was surprised at what I saw. I thought, *joh [gosh]*, I don't look lekker *[good]* anymore. *Vuil! [dirty]*. A shadow of what I had been. I think my life would have been different if I hadn't taken tik. I didn't accomplish anything in the months I was using it. Tik changes the way you think. Would my life have been different if I hadn't done it? Maybe. Maybe that was just the plan that was put out for my life... Either way, I decided I had to get rid of that woman.

A while after I broke it off with my first wife, I met Nina. We got married in 2008. We have two lovely children. I still live with my mommy and daddy and Nina and the children stay with her parents. We can't afford a place of our own.

Finding a job these days

It's much more difficult to find work these days. I don't know if it has to do with the economy or what. Perhaps it's that I don't have the right qualifications. Things don't seem to be working out for me. My brother-in-law and I tried to find a job at the business park in Steenberg. There are more than thirty companies there. When we got there, we saw that they were busy with a big building project, so we went and asked the foreman on duty if we could have a job. We told him that we can do anything. We are willing even to just mix the cement just so we have something to keep us busy. But he told us he had no job for us. Everywhere we went in that business park, we were told the same thing.

I've often thought about what would have happened if I had finished school and studied to become an architect. I think it would have worked out the same for me. I told you before that every cent in our house already goes toward surviving. So, even if I had worked and made more money, that money would have also just gone towards whatever was needed in our house. Although a little voice keeps saying that maybe, just maybe, it *would* have been different.

In the last year, I have started to work on computers with my brother-in-law and his friend. They have taught me to take computers apart and put them together again. I am doing okay with it, but those two are the ones that really know what they are doing. Sometimes, if they don't feel like doing something and they know I can do it, then they give the job to me. We don't have it going as a business yet, but I would really like it to grow. If I have my own business, I won't have anyone telling me to do this and that. I

have thought about getting business cards to advertise, but we don't have the qualifications. Where must we get the papers from to say we can do this? I guess we must just be happy fixing 'backdoor' computers.

Being a father

My mom was telling me the other day how I need to provide for my family and that my father can't do it anymore. I try to find ways to provide even though I don't have a job at the moment. When casual work comes up, I jump to take it!

My mother has taught me a lot about being a father. I know that I am sometimes wrong because I put my friends before my family – helping them before I help my own. I'm slowly learning to look after my own house now before I look after everyone else's. My children are becoming the most important thing in the world to me.

Regrets?

If I had to do it again, I don't think that I would change my decision to leave school. Luckily for me, no harm has ever come to me. I have never been drawn into a gang. I have never had any really bad troubles in my life like having to live on the street because I didn't have anywhere else to go.

Although I wouldn't change things, I feel sometimes that nothing worked out the way I had planned. It is hard to look back at some of the stupid choices I made. You know what they say mos [hey], "the choices you make today can determine what your life is going to be tomorrow". I wish I had been more patient with myself and with the situation. Now I am nearly thirty and I don't feel like I have really done anything with my life. But what does it help to have regrets? I can't go back and make changes, make things better.

I must just accept the way things are. I am trying my best to make things better for now.

Ralphi's Story

The luxury house, the 'burn', and the guardian

When I was young

Before the Group Areas Act was introduced, we lived in a different, nicer, whiter area. When I was only four or five years old, we were thrown out and we came to live in Lavender Hill. Even though times were tough, I remember being happy. I remember doing things with my friends that made us excited, that we looked forward to.

A group of us boys used to love gambling with paddas [*frogs*]! We used to cross the M5 highway when we were walking back to Lavender Hill and there by the little stream we used to find these big frogs. We would bring them back home with us and then see whose frog could jump the furthest! We would watch them jump jump JUMP! We would bet a half cent and a cent. In those days you could buy two sweets with a cent! The one whose frog won was the ouen [*guy*] who took home all the money.

One thing I remember from that time was how we used to respect our elders and how the children couldn't spend time in their company. We had to leave the room when all the adults were talking together. Parents were much stricter back then. We had to do things like polish our shoes for school and look after our Sunday clothes. I am glad we were raised like that, though. It made us better people today.

The luxury house

When I started high school, I always remember coming and going, coming and going. School was like a train station. No. A *luxury* house. There were no rules, no obligations, and no structure. I did as I pleased.

"Hello Ralphi, what would you like to do today?"

"Well, sir, I don't think I want to be here. No, I will rather choose to go there!"

"As you wish!"

My parents did not notice me getting away with things. This was normal. No one's parents noticed. And, wow! We got away with a lot. I was part of a group of children who made up their own rules, who dealt with a bad situation in the best way that we knew how. Most school days when my mom and dad thought I was at school, I was at a friend's house with other men and women, where everything was chaos! At the end of some days we ended up at the mall, sitting in the bioscope⁴.

I went to high school during the time of the riots during Apartheid. No one was at school to learn. We went to protest, to have our say. A group of us were part of the UDF [*United Democratic Front*]. School wasn't about learning. It was like a mad house back then! Small gangs formed in the school where guys from the same gang met one another in their own little corners. It was like having lots of 'smokey corners'. You know those spots at every school where the group of children who smoke all stand and smoke together. No one wanted to go to class. A kind of gangsterism started to take hold in our school. One class fought against another class. We found out in class who was going to fight against whom at break time. It was often a fight about girls. Every guy wanted to look impressive and pretend that it didn't affect him at the end of the day. And you know what? Perhaps it didn't...

I did well in grade 7, but when I got to high school I started to lose interest in school work with all the chaos erupting. I came late to school many days and landed myself in detention. I thought "what must I go and do there?" So each time I had detention, I stood up before the end of the day, took my bag, jumped over the fence and went home! We also had a competition on to see who could go home the earliest from school each day. Fridays were my favourite day because my friends and I only stayed at school until break. When break came, we would stand with a group of guys at the 'smokey corner', and have a smoke. When the bell rang for the end of break, we all jumped over the fence and went home. It was weekend baby!

At the end of grade 8 I didn't know what was going on, but I was sent to grade 9 anyway. Promoted even though I failed, I was told. When I got to grade 9, it felt like the teachers were speaking a strange language and that the work was from another planet. I didn't

⁴ The bioscope is an outdated term used to refer to a big-screen cinema where one would watch movies.

understand anything! Take 'x' and multiply it by the co-efficient of 'y' and you get 'z'! Huh? What is that?

The drone of the teachers' voices was like torture. There is only so long a person can manage when you feel bored and stupid all the time. I failed grade 9. I was promoted to grade 10. Same story, more confusion, more boredom, *NO* help. I don't know why I couldn't master grade 10. I can't help thinking whether I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

When you live in luxury, you have it easy. I had it easy because I chose to and no-one thought to help me choose something different. Not even the klap *[beating]* I got at the end of every term when my parents got my report and saw how many days I was absent stopped me doing what I was doing. At the end of grade 10, I decided to make my "living in luxury" permanent. I chose to leave school behind me. I looked forward. I would find a job. The luxury would continue. Isn't that the way things are supposed to work?

One year and counting

Boy was I surprised! I felt like an old woman. It's hard to remember what I did all day after I dropped out. It's all a blur. A bad memory. A dream. I wanted to wake up.

But I was already awake.

Every day was the same. I would wake up late. Watch soopies on TV. Drink a cup of tea. There's not much to do when you don't have anyone helping to give you structure. I was so frustrated with my situation. Some of the guys I hung out with were working and they had money to do things. Money makes the world go round. If you don't have that, then what do you have? I would beg and plead with my mom, dad and sister to give me money. They would. Even though there wasn't any.

My frustration festered, but I stayed far away from choosing to hang out "by die hoek" *[on the corner]*. People who hang out there are up to no good. I didn't want to get involved with them. I didn't want to land up a gangster. When I think about it, it's amazing that I didn't. My parents were strict – well, uh, kind of. Maybe that made the difference? I don't know what else there was. Except... Maybe, just maybe, it could have been my lifeline. There was one thing that kept me going and saved me from boredom.

The 'burn'⁵!

The burn was the only thing that could light a ferocious, fizzling fire under me. It got me going and kept me moving. It made me feel my age. I was worth something.

The burn was hot man!

I started dancing a long time ago, in grade 2 or grade 3. That time Michael Jackson's way of dancing was popular, then break-dancing was the flavour, then came hip hop and, eventually, the burn. 'The burn' was the name that people gave to a kind of dancing we used to do in those days. It is a dance that is a cross between Michael Jackson's kind of dancing and modern dancing. It is more like hip hop but still a bit different. And man, that kind of dancing gave us a chance to experience things! A group of us who were interested in dancing in Lavender Hill formed our own group. We called ourselves 'The Dare Devils.' That time you used to walk between the kortes [blocks of flats] in Lavender Hill to get home and every kort [block of flats] you came across, you saw small groups who were standing and dancing together! Then our group would take on another group and have a competition right there. Why? 'Cause, joh [gosh], it was fun!

Belonging to something like The Dare Devils gave us power. We were part of something bigger than ourselves. I didn't have any interest in being part of a gang when I was in high school. I had The Dare Devils! We used to practice together as a team and when we were a little older we would compete in night clubs where the competitions were held. There were judges and prize money. The competition was fierce. Everyone wanted to win in those clubs. I clearly remember this one competition when we came second. There was big money to be won. R3000 for second place. You would think that young boys with so much money would spend it on junk. But not us. We were wise with our money. We always needed things to help us to be able to keep competing. Like stage costumes. Those were really expensive and we always wanted to look our best. We also bought a Super Woofer [big speaker]. That thing was huge! It was like having our own personal disco. We took it *everywhere*. We attracted attention and we liked it. On the beach the music would boom and all the girls would come running to us. We were cool and we knew it!

⁵ The burn was a type of dancing performed by children, adolescents and young adults on the Cape Flats.

But girls, they were the end of us. They caused the death of The Dare Devils.

I played a part

Although we were a team, when I think about it, we didn't act like one another's friends. We did things that friends wouldn't do. That I am not proud of. And so, eventually, the group split up. I think I was 24 or 25 at the time. And the sad thing is that part of it was my fault.

One night when one of our team members – my 'close' friend – was not around, I got together with his girl. We got involved emotionally, sexually. I got her pregnant. It was the worst thing I could have done. My friend was prepared to marry this girl and I ruined it.

I also ruined The Dare Devils. It wasn't the first time one of us had done something like that. It was just the straw that broke the camel's back. We created the conditions for our own suicide.

Fatherly responsibilities

It was heavy to become a father that way, but I love my daughter a heck of a lot. And I miss her. I never married my daughter's mother and so I don't get to play a big role in her life. Her mother is getting married to a Belgium man and they are moving to Belgium. It kills me not to know what's happening with her. I can't even speak to her over the phone because her mother's new man is so jealous. I used to miss her even when she was in Lavender Hill because it was difficult being a part of her life. Miss Fiela Adams, a teacher at the school where I work now, is really one of the people who understood me and the situation I was in. More about that later though. In this instance, she created little places during my day where I could be a father, where I could feel a part of my daughter's life. Like letting my daughter bring me her school report and show me how well she's done, so I could share that with her. Those moments with my daughter were precious, but weren't enough. I always long to be more a part of my daughter's life.

I have a son from my wife who I met later. We had my son before we got married though. These days things have changed with him and life with him is difficult. He is 16

years old and he wants to drop out of school. He smokes boom [*dagga*⁶] and doesn't care about his future. I am worried about his attitude. I don't know how to be his father at the moment and make him see things differently - that his life will turn out badly if he continues in this way.

Fishing was the 'flavour'

One of the other things I loved about my life in my younger years, was angling. I started fishing when I was really young. Joh [*gosh*], there's so much to tell about my fishing and the adventures we had! When I was still at school, my friends and I used to fish on the weekends. We used to leave the house on a Friday evening and go to Kalk Bay, where we would fish through the night and into the next day. On Saturday night when the tide came in we would sleep in Kalk Bay under the train station and wait for it to fall. Then we would fish the whole day Sunday and come home with a klomp vis [*bunch of fish*]. I loved fishing so much that I made sacrifices to get what I needed to do it. I once used all my money to buy a new fishing rod. That fishing rod was kwaai [*cool*] and would one day catch me my biggest fish.

When I was 13 years old and in grade 8, my friend Harley and I were in Kalk Bay Harbour fishing one day. That time we still used to use what we called 'xmas tree stokkies', which were like those little fold up rods. This old guy, whose name I don't remember, stopped us and said "Hey! Don't you boys want to be part of an angling club?"

He could see that we were good despite our poor equipment. I didn't ever think this would happen to us. We were really chuffed to have the chance to be part of something like this. We joined the Fishing Friends Angling Club.

The club met one Thursday out of every month. We learnt valuable things from the guys who went there. They taught us to fish with bigger rods. We started off with coffee grinders, but we moved on to pen reels which were better. We were given the chance to enter casting competitions, taught how to score points, what bait we should use, how long our lines should be, the areas we should fish in! Although the club loaned us rods

⁶ Dagga is a drug that is usually smoked by those who take it, but can also be ingested. With prolonged use it can cause psychological defects and is also considered to be a precursor for experimenting with more dangerous drugs (www.drugaware.co.za/dagga.html).

and reels, we still had to get our own sinkers, line and bait. We didn't have a lot of money, but we were ingenious ouens [guys]. We used to go to the garages and ask for old spark plugs to use as sinkers. Sometimes we would look in the surf and on the rocks and the sea would give us a few bonus ones. We had our bag of mix-and-tricks that we picked up along the way and we did much better than those other guys with their fancy equipment!

This all happened during Apartheid, but it didn't matter what colour you were when you were angling and doing those competitions. The casting competitions were held on a big field and we were all competitors alongside one another. That's why I could never understand why, when we were off the field, we had to all go back into our little boxes. The coloured man had his box and the white man had his! The coloured man's box was always much smaller and there was no way out of it. Once you were in, you were in! The only time I felt like I was out of that box was when I was in those competitions, fishing with the other guys at the club.

I met some really interesting people through the angling club, who exposed me to other opportunities. A friend at the club, Felix, brought his boss along and he joined up too. His boss, Kabiell, owned his own business and he had money. He would always use the best equipment and bait when he fished. He was the one who introduced us to the place called Arniston. It is one of my favourite places and many of my best memories are from my trips there. We would go up in Kabiell's car and spend the night in this cave nearby where we fished. That cave was like a boarding house for us. It was just us guys with a fire to cook and keep warm and a cooler box to make sure that we kept the fish that we caught fresh. And, at night, the most beautiful sight I have ever seen. Bats used to swarm in when we lit our fire. We used to lie very still and flat on the floor and watch them until they decided when to fly out again. Those weekends in Arniston were so satisfying for me. The best part – you never went home empty-handed. There was always fish to catch.

Kabiell, Felix and I had some of the best times together. But unfortunately they didn't last. Well, Kabiell and I didn't last, that is. One Friday, his attitude towards me changed. I really always felt like Kabiell was jealous of me. He had a girl, Belinda, who was also part of the club. That fateful Friday we went fishing together. We went to get bait in

Muizenberg, packed our sandwiches and coffee, put on warm clothes, and left to go to Bluewaters. That night I got lucky and caught a thirteen-and-a-half kilogram Steenbras! Kabiël was not happy. He seemed jealous of me and my catch. That ouen [guy] even tried to pull on my line while I was trying to bring the Steenbras in! He heard me vloek [curse] one time at him. Any swear words I knew came out my mouth that day! After he dropped me at home that night I never really saw him much again. He would pretend at the club that he was still my friend. Make out as if he was still willing to pick me up for meetings and fishing trips. But he never came. No matter how long I waited for him. Each time he said he would fetch me, he never pitched. I started getting a lift with another man at the club, Mr Fannie, and whenever I pitched up Kabiël looked bleak [disappointed]. After a while, Mr Fannie moved and couldn't give me a lift anymore.

Fishing began to fade. My involvement was a shadow of its former self. In the end it disappeared without me really noticing. I fished a few times at Sunny Cove with a guy who lived down the road from me. And then it was over. My rod is my souvenir. My only reminder. The sea used to make me feel free. She could make me forget all of my problems. And now I don't have a chance to feel that way anymore.

Dreams, dreams, dreams

When I was young, I always had a dream to work on those big passenger liners. I thought that if I took some safety courses at this college I heard about, it would get me what I needed to work on the ships. I wrote the exams for it and studied, but I never got my results. It was all a scam!

And so I sold short.

When my friend got me a job on the docks, I thought I would just take it. It's not so bad. It was the closest thing to my dream anyway.

Job after job after job and then...

I was actually quite excited to start my first job at the Simonstown Docks. Before that, I had only ever had a job working weekends at Hardware Stores while I was at school. My father had a friend there who had let me come and work for him.

I started at the docks a week before break-up day. Break-up day is the day before Christmas holidays where everyone is on holiday and no one works anymore. I started in the painting section, where you had to scale and paint the ships that came in. I still remember our strange uniforms. People called us the “Ninja Turtles” because we had green overalls and back packs and orange helmets with funny boots! At the end of that week, I got such a surprise when we got paid because we were supposed to work two weeks before getting any money. But the other guys told me that we got paid because it was break-up day! I thought that I didn’t have a job anymore, but the supervisor told me that I must come back the next year in January. I was glad because I enjoyed working there.

When I went back, I was reassigned to the French Polishing section as a contract worker. That was the section where they restored all the old furniture for the ships. Another guy, Leroy, and I worked together under a man named Jimmy, who was really good at his job. He was sort of retired, but he still knew exactly what he was doing. He was old-school and did everything properly. That old guy made Leroy and me really clever. He taught us so many things and at the end of our time there we knew a lot about that trade. One day, without any notice, they let Jimmy go for good because he could no longer get his pension and work. They sent two other appies [apprentices] who were permanent workers at the docks and Leroy and I had to train them. Once those guys knew everything that we did, the supervisors told us that we were finished there. We gave our knowledge away. I got a job for a while in the painting section after that, but it only lasted about two weeks. When my contract ended, they sent me home. They told me they would phone me for more work. They never did.

A little later, I got a job with a man named Mr Allie at Popular Painters. We painted people's houses for them. After that I went to go and work again for Hardware Stores because my father’s contact, Mr Owen, helped me get another job. Hardware Stores closed down soon after, but Mr Owen started up his own business from home and let me come and work for him. We mostly built doors, sashes and frames because Lotus Doors was Mr Owen’s biggest contract. But that guy made me work hard and didn’t pay me much at all. So after one long year with him I decided to leave and go back and work for Mr Allie. When Allie ran out of work, I started at Bruce’s Engineering. A friend of my eldest brother got me the job. We learnt to build conveyers, hoppers, cookers and chill

tanks there. I stayed for 5 years before leaving. I had an argument with one of the foreman and I decided to leave because I had had enough. I was at home for 6 months when, eventually, I got a contract position painting for Davie's Store in Wynberg. It was difficult finding a job that time. After my contract ended at Davie Store's, I got a job with my brother working for False Bay Timbers and building trusses for the roofs. I had two three-month contracts with them with a break in between. Once I was done with them, I was done because they couldn't renew my contract.

I was at home for some time after that before I got the job at Olivia Primary. First as a contract worker and then as a permanent member of staff.

An opportunity presents itself

I still remember the day when my eldest son came home and told me something that made me sit up and take notice. By a twist of fate, his teacher had asked whose daddy was at home and he had told her that I was at home without work. His teacher had asked him to ask me to come into the school because there was some part-time work available. The school needed someone to put some new windows in.

His teacher was Miss Fiela Adams. She has been my guardian.

Once I started working at Olivia Primary, doing odd jobs, Miss Adams always made sure that I had something. She negotiated with some contractors who were working at the school and I ended up doing some work for them, painting the school roof. But they stole my sweat! I worked there for three or four weeks and they didn't pay me! In the meantime, Miss Adams was busy negotiating with the school for me to be put on contract. When I heard that I had got the contract, I forgot all about the incident with the contractors in my excitement. At the end of the first month of working at Olivia, I was paid R2000. Wow! I was so proud of myself. The first thing I thought to do was pay my son's school fees. After four or five years of working on contract, I was made permanent. The people at Olivia are like my family. I've kept this job. I've made something of myself.

I am proud that I am able to do things for my community. I am on the school governing body and I'm good at it because I understand my community and how it works. People respect me here – even those parents at the school who are dik [big time] gangsters greet me when I see them in the street. I can go anywhere in Lavender Hill and people treat

me this way. I hold my authority at the school and if anyone causes trouble I have no problem telling them straight “this is a school and people must be respected here!”

The puzzle of my life

When I look back, the truth is that I got most of my jobs because people handed them to me. I only ever went for two interviews that I organised for myself and nothing came from those. I didn't really have any direction at first, any idea of where I wanted to go. But one thing I did know was that having a matric wasn't going to get me there anyway. A matric means nothing here in Lavender Hill. Matriculants sit 'by die hoek' [*on the corner*] with everyone else who didn't finish school.

So sometimes I guess I wonder why I've turned out different if I didn't finish school and all my jobs landed in my lap. When I think about it, I don't believe that you need matric to get somewhere in this life, but you do need something to help you other than yourself. It feels like coloured people are the ball in a game of tennis between a black man and a white man. We bounce from one place to another and don't get very far unless we have someone to help us. Here you have to rely on friends, but **you** also need to set your mind on something. You can then start to see the light at the end of the tunnel and come out there. So, although I never had a big plan for my life, I did make use of my opportunities. I learnt a lot from all the things that I was doing and I learnt from the people I was doing them with. And I also had a bit of help from my friend, Fiela Adams, who gave me the opportunity to work at this school and who believed in me and that I could be something more. For her, I will always be grateful.

I am happy with who I am today. My choices may not all have been good, but I haven't landed up too badly.

Gavin's Story

A U-turn in the road to nowhere

I came into this world alone. Abandoned. At a loss. And that is how I felt for 17 years of my life until the Lord called me to Him.

I don't know who my biological parents are. I never met them. It's a hard thing not to know your real family. Not to know if your parents are dead or alive or how many brothers and sisters you might have out there. There was *one* person who always looked out for me: my Ouma.

My Ouma was a Meintjie [*family name*] and she took me into her home when I was just three months old. She took responsibility for me and she treated me like one of the family, even though she had no biological connection to me. But somehow I always felt strange. In a sense, I don't think I really ever felt that I belonged. I was the 'black' sheep. There was conflict with the other children in the family. They said that Ouma spoiled me. There isn't a time I can remember when I felt relaxed and comfortable, like one should in a family. Mina, Ouma's daughter, ended up adopting me officially. Ouma was too old. Mina wasn't a bad woman, but we didn't have a stable home life and things were hard back then. We lived in an informal settlement, initially, that was close to Lavender Hill. I used to wish and hope for a father. I longed for a dad who would call me his own. He never came. There was always that longing.

I would wait for him patiently though. I would watch Mina come home with men. She would start calling them her boyfriend. I would think of them as my dad. I would wish to call them 'papa'. I got my wish sometimes. The one man Mina married I thought of as my father. But he always lived his life away from his family and it landed him in jail. I carried on wishing... I wished for a role model. Someone who would show me what it meant to be a man; what I needed to do to be successful in this life; what I needed to do to look after a family. Most of all, I wished for a father who would care even a little about me; about where I was and what I was doing; about where I was going.

I started to drift away... I began travelling a road that did not lead anywhere.

Caught adrift

I found some of what I was looking for at Cyril's Service Station. That place was like the home I never had in the sense that I felt I belonged there. I started working for Mr Cyril as a petrol attendant when I was very young - I was 12 years old and still at school. I even worked for Mr Cyril's brother sometimes in his store across from the garage. I worked on weekends, after school, and during the holidays.

A picture not so posed

Heartsore. That is the only word I have to describe what I feel when I look back at myself at school. I have this picture – it shows you a glimpse of what my life was like.

The photo I am thinking of is very old. Its corners are bent and it is crumpled. I don't have it anymore, but I kept it with me for a long time. In it, is a small boy, very small. He sits on his own at a school table playing with clay. He wears clothes that are torn. You can catch a glimmer of hope in his eyes. But where he finds himself there is no hope. There is no guidance. At least not at school. At that time, life was a struggle. I am able to tell this because things are different now, but they might not have been if I had continued down that road to nowhere...

I am heartsore for many reasons when I look back. The main one is because I truly and absolutely loved school. I was a clever boy and I learnt to read and write and I enjoyed it. I was alone, although I never thought much about it back then. I never had anyone to help me make the right decisions, to think about the choices I was making at such a young age. My Ouma did her best to get me into school, but she couldn't help me much after that. I have to be honest with myself though. I didn't look for guidance either. The freedom I had swallowed me up and pulled me away from school. And so, I am heartsore because, despite loving school, I did not finish it. I think sometimes that if I had the right guidance, I would have gone far. But I decided to leave when I was 12 years old, after moving from Jameson Boys in Grassy Park to John Marais Primary in Steenberg. At the end of the December holidays in Grade 6 I just didn't go back. The worst part is that I told myself it was for the best. I convinced myself that I was doing it to help at home, to bring extra money in. I think that was just an excuse. I wanted to work, but bringing in extra money wasn't the only reason. I wanted to spend all of my time at the garage - where it was fun, where it was exciting, where I felt I belonged.

Working and playing

The garage was an exciting place to be for two reasons. Firstly, I could do something that had value, on my own, at such a young age! Secondly, the garage felt like home. It was open 24 hours a day. I could even sleep there if I wanted to! There was a Dance Hall across the road and it breathed life into the garage whenever people came there late at night to dance. At Mina's home, I came and went as I pleased. There was no strict discipline, no boundaries.

I was the one in charge of my own lot.

This kind of life is very appealing for a young boy. Things were too easy at the garage. It was a win-win situation. Mr Cyril never asked why I wasn't in school because he could pay me cheaply to do good work. At the same time, he gave me what I needed. I was working, but I was also playing.

I was playing I had a family. I was playing with my life.

I started to do naughty things. I smoked. I drank. I did the things that the older men at the garage did. I spent time watching them, learning from them. No-one ever asked me the important questions like "why aren't you at home?" or "why aren't you in school?" In Lavender Hill, people think that at least if you are working you are not on the street. My behaviour took its toll on my health. I tried to run and play sports like a young boy should, but I had the lungs of an older man. I was going very fast down a self-destructive path. The years passed. I was 12, 13, 14, then 15 years old. And all the time there was this nagging question at the back of my mind. *My question.* The question that kept me awake at night. The question that stopped me walking down 'that road'. I had to build up the courage to ask myself this question directly.

"As ek so aangaan wat gaan van my word?" [If I keep going on like this, what will happen to me?]

The day I was finally brave enough to ask myself that question outright, it stopped me dead in my tracks. The fear I felt was like my shadow. Like a line drawn in the sand. Like an ultimatum. It made me decide that I must stop. I must make a change.

The return of the prodigal son

It was round this time in 1975, when I was 15 years old, that Mina got a council house in Lavender Hill. It wasn't a big house, but it was enough. Like a wind that blew some excitement into our lives. We had a house! I decided to return to our new home. To Mina. To Lavender Hill. To save her.

I was shocked at the state she was in when I visited her at the time. Mina was asthmatic. She wasn't working. Her husband was in jail. Her real son had made no move to help her financially. And I realised, even at such a young age, that I needed to do something. I needed to jump in. I decided that leaving the garage and returning home was the change I needed. If no-one gave me boundaries I would give myself boundaries. At that same time, people came from all over Cape Town into Lavender Hill because of the Apartheid government's relocation policy. Picked up like playing pieces in a board game and made to live there without a choice. And with Lavender Hill came the setting up of our friendship circle. And the gangs.

A whole group of us young men living in Lavender Hill became friends. We smoked together, drank together, and partied together. We loved to look for wood to build a fire at night where we could sit and socialise. We would play cards and talk late into the night. In those days TV was new in South Africa and we would pay to watch our favourite shows on weekends. We would visit the sports field on the weekend and watch people play soccer. We had a lot of good times. But the gang element was strong. Because of the kind of life I led, it called to me, *"come and be part of us, we will give you what you need"*. Gang fighting was the order of the day. It was the Mafias versus the Mongrels. You had a choice. Be part of them, or apart from them. Our group of friends considered what was before us and decided that smoking, drinking and partying is okay, but gang life was not for us. The flashy life was appealing, but we stood our ground and decided not to be a part of that. It is only by the grace of God that I made that decision.

Life went on. And I needed a job. I decided to go and look for work at a factory. I also decided to give school another try. I enrolled in night school to do grade 7 at Delaware, but I didn't finish this either. It just slipped away from me. I wanted to find work and this was more important for me. Work had so many more benefits that outweighed school. I found employment quite easily at a factory called Bagmores, as a sweeper.

The more things change, the more they stay the same

I had no experience and I was only 15 years old. I was lucky that Bagmores employed me. I knew I needed to be 16 years to work there, so I lied and they believed me. I also had a few good things on my side. I was hard-working and a smart boy who could read and write and do calculations and the people at Bagmores saw this. My responsibilities involved sweeping the factory and going with the driver to do deliveries because I was the one who could read the names of the places and the road signs! Me! The one who did not finish school.

My life continued as it had before though. I took the drinking and smoking with me to the factory - because it was a factory. That was what people who worked in the factory did. I worked at Bagmores for two years. When my aunt saw the way things were, she tried to get me a job at a college where she worked as a general cleaner. It didn't work out though, and so I found my next job through my uncle, as a plumber. I quite enjoyed the idea of becoming a plumber and my uncle's boss employed me as one of his apprentices. But I was still playing. Gambling with my future. When the riots happened in the 1970's and everyone stayed away from school and from work, I stayed away too. It was a mistake. I took a chance. I rolled the dice. I lost.

I lost my job. It was a huge shock. I lost an opportunity. I was just starting to like what I was doing.

A U-turn in the road to nowhere

Shortly after losing my job as a plumber, I found employment in another factory called Fellow Fabrics. I can say to this day, with complete certainty, that my life would have been very different if I had never gone to work at Fellow Fabrics and met Johnnie Jillespie. Johnnie was the role model I had been looking for in a man. He encouraged me to try my life differently. To see things from a different perspective. A perspective that was God's perspective and not my own. Fate brought us together and I thank God for that. But I also believe that the yearning in my heart for something more, for something different, started to grow stronger a little before that, when I started going to church again.

When I was very young, I would only go to church on special occasions like Christmas and Easter. I started to notice all the young children coming from confirmation classes and I too wanted to be part of something like that. I was hungry for something. I think it was for the love of a father, for the direction in my life that would take me somewhere. I began going to confirmation classes at the Christian Congregational Church. But the classes didn't fill me up in the way I expected them too. When I think back, I imagine myself like a stray dog who was so hungry and was searching for any scrap of food to eat. And when he finds a small piece of meat to eat, it is at the same time delicious and a curse because he is hungry for more and now he has the taste for meat. And that hunger was fuelled by Johnnie who was a real man of God. I watched his life. I saw how he spoke. I saw what he did. And the longing grew stronger.

On the morning of my confirmation I was dressed and ready in my handsome black suit, but Mina couldn't come with me to church. She was sick and the ambulance stood before our house to take her to hospital. So I went through the motions anyway - through being confirmed and worrying about Mina. My heart seemed empty. I needed something to change me. My search for what I was looking for ended on the 10th November 1977 just after I turned 17 years old. The asthma was making Mina sick and causing her to go to hospital. Johnnie suggested we have a prayer meeting at the house to pray for her recovery. It was that night that I decided to give my heart and my life to the Lord. It was that night that my life took a drastic turn. Like a car that had U-turned and taken a different direction. A better direction. A more fulfilling one.

My life had a purpose. God had turned me around and set me walking in a new direction. And it gave me a sense of control. For the first time, I felt like I could do something about my circumstances. The next morning when Mina felt sick from her asthma, it was me who read to her from the Bible and prayed for her. With this new purpose and passion for the Lord came a change in what I was doing. I stopped drinking. I stopped smoking. I stopped partying. I took action towards my purpose.

I looked at other people who were doing the same things that I had done previously and it concerned me. Is that really where my life was heading? I was unhappy at Fellow Fabrics because I had to work 2 weeks of nightshift during the month and that meant I could not go to church. So I went back to Bagmores, where there was no night shift, to

ask for my old job back. They agreed. I moved to a different position in the factory, which was very exciting for me. Fate brought me a chance to work on the factory machines. And my own need to move forward, to do better, kept bringing me chances to move up in the factory. I took my chances eagerly.

Climbing the ladder

With this personal change came a deepening of my commitment to everything in my life. At work, people started to notice me. Everyone liked me and I liked them. I had become something different. And so I started to climb the ladder to more important places in the factory. I worked at Bagmores for 23 years, until my life reached another fork in the road. This time, the road was to 'somewhere'.

I was ordained as a pastor in 1995, when I was 35 years old, at the Christian Centre Church. I didn't have any formal training in the Ministry. In 1992, I decided to attend a course which was offered at the Christian Congregational Church, but this didn't offer a formal qualification in pastoral work. It was a three-year course and it gave me all the necessary skills and training in leadership, but it didn't guarantee me a position as pastor.

To become a pastor, I had to work my way up in the church. First I became a Sunday School teacher. After a while, I took up the position of deacon, then elder, then head elder. I had never dreamt of high positions, or of going anywhere significant in my life. Yes, I had always wanted more, but I never thought I would get here! It just goes to show that who I was on my own in this community was not enough because Lavender Hill is a challenge that one must face on a daily basis. God had plans for me and that is why I am who I am today and why I have done the things I've done. After 1995, I had to divide myself in two! On the one hand, I needed to be a pastor to my congregation; on the other hand, I had to be the supervisor at Bagmores. Eventually I was called in by my boss at the factory and he told me that I couldn't go on like this. I had to make a choice. I had to choose either one side of the fork or the other. That choice wasn't difficult for me. I knew who I was and what I wanted from life. I chose the church.

Reflections

Today I am the pastor of a successful church. We are building ourselves from the ground up. I have had to be careful to get the balance right because being a pastor is demanding. It is work that is done 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I never had the formal academic qualifications required because I never finished school. I had to rely on hard work, passion, and faith in God to carry me in the direction I wanted to go. I am only here by the grace of God. If I had carried on doing the things I was doing, my life would have been in ruins.

I have a wife and three children, two of whom have finished school and one who is in grade 12 and has the potential to go to university next year. Although my wife and I both did not finish school, we still know the importance of taking responsibility for our family. I can't say for certain what direction my life would have taken if I had finished school, and although it is painful to think about that loss, I do not regret it. Sometimes it seems that many times dropping out in Lavender Hill is inevitable. So I am glad I had the chance to experience God rescuing what was left of my life - the part that was worth saving. I am happy with all the footsteps on my road called life.

But, mostly, I am happy that those footsteps changed direction!

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES

This chapter presents the outcomes of the second level analysis. The analysis of the participants' differential trajectories, as well as the progression of their trajectories over time, is appreciated in the culmination of the key research findings. I refer to examples from the research stories to support the interpretation. Verbatim quotes, which can be found in Appendices F, G, and H, justify the interpretations made. These quotes are referenced using numbers that correspond in the relevant appendix. The pseudonyms used in the research stories are applied in this text.

Three core categories encompassed within an overarching theme emerged through the analytic process. The categories ***"Niks gechange nie"*** [nothing changes], ***"Maybe sommige dinge is possible"*** [maybe some things are possible], and ***"Dit kan beter wees"*** [it can be better] will be discussed in turn. The overarching theme will be presented after the categories have been explored highlighting their culmination in a single key finding ***"The submissive nature of occupational participation"***.

Category 1

“Niks gechange nie” [nothing changes]:

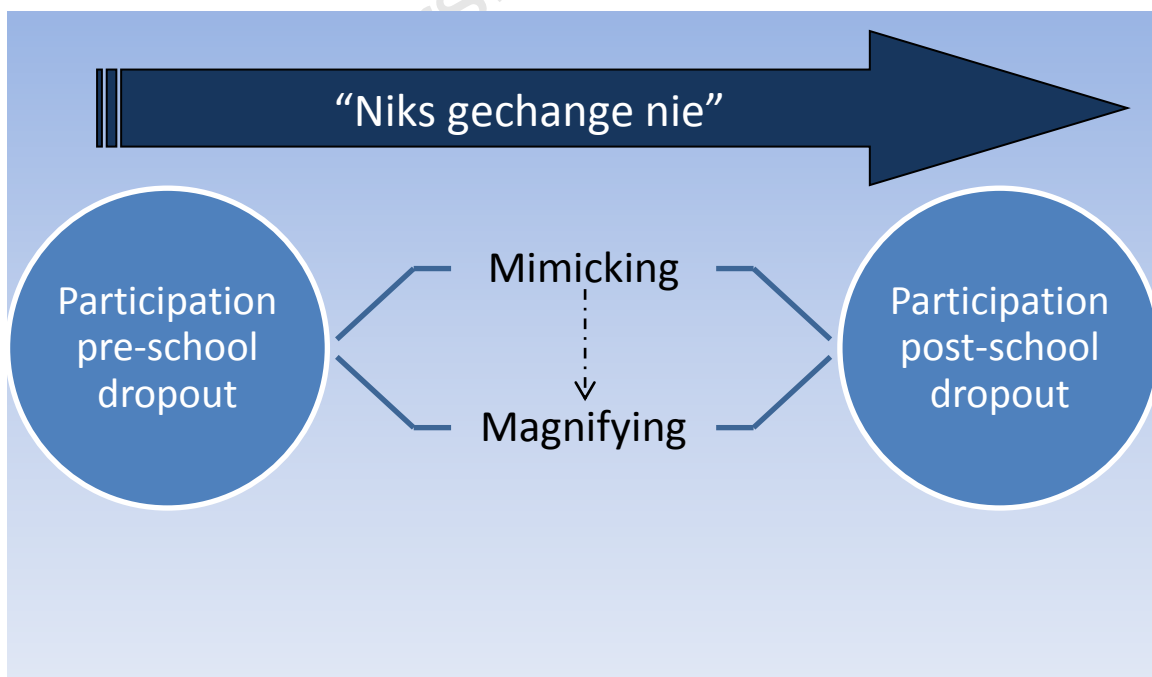
Perpetuated Patterns of Participation

[Please refer to appendix F for supporting quotes]

Patterns of participation are recognised as those occupations that the participants have at their disposal and perform over time, and the way in which the participants choose to act within occupations. This category describes these patterns as well as the mechanisms by which they are perpetuated.

Perpetuated patterns of participation are evident in the participants’ stories if one considers what the participants were doing prior to dropping out of school and what they continued to do or chose to take on after dropping out of school. The participants’ patterns of participation revealed overwhelmingly that nothing changed over time. This was evident in the manifestation of similar patterns of participation after dropping out of school. These patterns mimicked prior participation or became magnified, although magnification was not always the case. The way in which the various facets of this category manifested are presented in Figure 3 below.

FIGURE 3: “NIKS GECHANGE NIE” [nothing changes]



Patterns of Participation after dropping out of school mimic prior participation

The character of occupations that the participants participated in after dropping out of school were the same as, or similar to, the character of occupations participated in whilst still in school. Gavin continued and expanded his participation at the garage as a petrol attendant and Ralphie continued to participate in dancing and angling. Continued participation in these occupations provided them with the opportunity to partly structure their time in the absence of school as a structuring influence. They derived a sense of purpose through this engagement. Clino's participation while he was in school did not consist of the kinds of occupations that were evident in Gavin's and Ralphie's stories. Clino's primary occupation was socialising with his friends. Socialising with his friends was thus what he continued to do after he chose to leave school. His occupational participation was extensively influenced by his peer group.

Clino learnt particular ways of engaging through his participation in school. He learnt that a legitimate way to deal with the issues he faced was to challenge authority, withdraw from the occupation in question, and to do his own thing. Clino's employment history was characterised by similar patterns of participation, illustrating their perpetuation over time. Each time he was unhappy about an aspect of his employment, he simply chose to resign rather than to negotiate with his employers around his unhappiness¹.

Ralphie's engagement at school also consolidated the particular manner in which he dealt with difficulties. He tended to see his participation as being a result of

"...seker maar net oppie verkere plek oppie verkere tye."

[certainly in the wrong place at the wrong time]

As a result, he tended to abdicate responsibility for his participation whilst in school and acted in ways that made sense to him given the influences of his peer group and school environment. After dropping out of school he continued to participate as if he were living in a 'luxury house', assuming little responsibility for his future. Financial means from his family promoted this way of engaging. His prior participation was mimicked after he dropped out of school in the occupation of socialising with his

friends. The absence of school in structuring his occupational repertoire led to the magnification of this occupation over time. Ralph's perpetuated patterns were reflected in the way in which his dance group separated. Ralph and his fellow group members chose to abandon the occupation of dancing as a result of group differences, jealousy and the inability to work out these issues constructively. When Ralph faced interpersonal challenges related to participating in the angling club he also lost the opportunity to participate. Instead of looking more specifically for another way to participate in these occupations, he simply allowed them to fall away as he had done with school. His participation over time mimicked his prior way of participating. This is illustrated further when one considers his employment history. His engagement in work occupations showed the frequency with which he changed jobs earlier on in his life. His inability to apply different ways of participating meant that his initial work trajectory was turbulent. Both Clino and Ralph demonstrate frequent changes in work occupations, which appear as a pattern across their lives².

The context of participation was a key factor in determining patterns of participation. The factors shaping the participants' occupational participation prior to dropout influenced what they continued to do after dropping out.

Patterns of participation reveal the magnification of previous participation after dropping out of school

The lack of the structuring influence of school after dropout enabled the magnification of prior ways of participating. In the absence of the obligatory occupation of school, the participants were challenged to fill the available free time. Established ways of participating prior to dropping out powerfully influenced what was participated in after dropping out. Prior patterns of participation were thus magnified after dropping out.

Clino's participation in occupations characterised by recklessness was magnified post school dropout. This happened within the context of socialising with his friends. His reckless engagement was partly contained while at school, probably as a result of the partial obligation he felt to at least be present at school each day. After he dropped out of school he had no such obligation, which meant he was free to engage even more recklessly. The result was more frequent participation in the occupation of partying. His reckless engagement in this occupation continued throughout his occupational

trajectory. Although the acquisition of certain work occupations served to curb his participation somewhat, as school had done, partying was a recurring theme in his life story. This might have been as a result of the fact that Clino had consolidated partying as an occupation while he was at school.

Ralphi began to engage more extensively in the occupation of dancing post school dropout. It would appear that in the absence of external structure being provided by the school context, both Clino and Ralphi found ways to use occupation to structure their participation patterns. For Ralphi this occurred as a result of the negative way in which he experienced the lack of structure after leaving school. The formality of participation that his dance group offered, even though it was a self-initiated group, provided structure in a positive sense. Clino's story reveals that the lack of participation in an occupation with formal rules and obligations contributed to perpetuating his participation in occupations that potentially compromised the opportunity to develop a more stable occupational trajectory.

The imperative of providing structure reinforced the mimicking and magnification processes related to patterns of participation. The participants were compelled to seek and expand their participation in occupations that would assist them in reconstituting their occupational repertoires after dropping out of school. This had the potential to act as a positive or a negative influence in the participants' lives depending on their patterns of participation at the point of school dropout and just after dropout. Initial occupations in the participants' lives therefore cemented particular ways of doing. Where participants modified what they did after leaving school, they tended to show the application of similar patterns of participation within different occupations. This meant that, although occupations might have changed, prior patterns of participation were still mimicked at particular points in time. This had the potential to have either a positive or a negative influence on the participants' occupational trajectories. The role demands of the occupations that the participants chose to or had to engage in shaped these perpetuating patterns in accordance with the social context of participation.

In conclusion, this category has shown how the participants' patterns of participation are perpetuated after dropping out of school over the course of the life span. Patterns of participation are mimicked post school dropout. The potential then exists for these

patterns to become magnified over time since participants are required to restructure their use of time in the absence of school. The kind of patterns that constitute the occupational participation of participants before and after dropping out of school reflect the contextual expectations for the participation of young men living in Lavender Hill.

University of Cape Town

Category 2

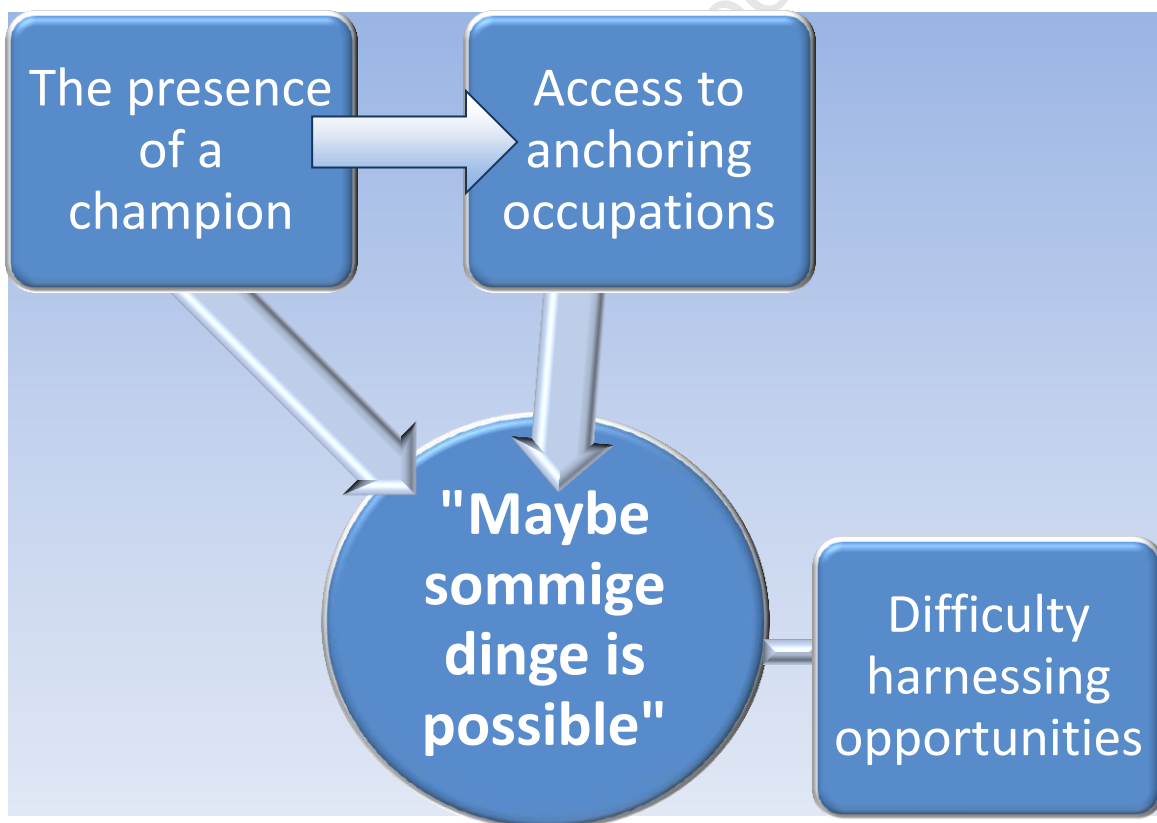
“Maybe sommige dinge is possible” [maybe some things are possible]:

The Realm of Possibility

[Please refer to Appendix G for supporting quotes]

This category describes the possibilities available to the participants by examining the way in which opportunities for occupational participation came about after the participants dropped out of school. It illuminates the mechanisms by which opportunities were either hindered or promoted and the impact that this had on the participants’ occupational participation at various points in time. The key aspects of **“Maybe sommige dinge is possible”** [Maybe some things are possible] are captured in Figure 4 below.

FIGURE 4: “MAYBE SOMMIGE DINGE IS POSSIBLE” [Maybe some things are possible]



The above figure illustrates that what was possible for the participants after school dropout was impacted on by the presence of a key individual, termed a champion, in their lives. The champion created opportunities for the participants to access

opportunities and possibly develop anchoring occupations. Anchoring occupations then widened the scope of possibility for participants. Concurrently, the difficulties that participants faced in harnessing opportunities after dropping out of school negatively influenced what was possible for them in terms of occupational participation.

The presence of a champion enhances what is possible

The presence of a 'champion' in the participants' lives contributed to the development of a stable occupational trajectory despite limits that prevented the harnessing of opportunities. A 'champion' is seen to be an individual who advocated for the participants. The different champions believed that the participants deserved an opportunity and so offered this to them and supported them in their endeavours. The benefit of a champion becomes apparent when one considers the occupational participation that occurs in his/her absence.

When viewing the three research stories alongside one another, it becomes evident that Gavin and Ralph experienced the influence of a champion, whereas Clino did not. However, Gavin's and Ralph's champions only emerged later in their lives. There were many instances prior to this when the benefit of a champion would have made a difference to the way in which they were able to access and engage with opportunities for occupational participation. Prior to Gavin and Ralph meeting their champions, as well as in Clino's story, we see what I have termed 'glimpses of a champion'. These are episodes where individuals in the participants' lives provided particular kinds of resources or support to assist the participants in their occupational participation. Although these resources were valuable, they did not structure opportunities for participation that were required at the time. For example, Clino's uncle offered to pay for his school fees and school uniform so that he could return to school after dropping out¹. Although access to financial resources was important in terms of encouraging Clino to participate in school, what he really needed at the time was academic support as well as mentorship². Later in Clino's life, his mother attempted to encourage him to play the role of a provider to his children and to consider their needs above those of his friends³. This was important in terms of engaging in his role as a father. It meant that he needed to attempt to embrace opportunities for occupational participation such as maintaining employment. Had Clino's mother begun to play this role earlier in his life

and been a more consistent presence in this regard, she might have developed into Clino's champion. She appeared to be one of the catalytic factors that meant that he began to reconstruct his occupational participation towards ensuring that he could provide as a father. Ralph's parents attempted to ensure that he continued to participate at school in a productive way by disciplining him when they felt he had been naughty⁴. This was not the type of support that Ralph needed. He required academic support that would have helped him stay in school. Gavin's ouma attempted to ensure that he attended school in his younger years even though this was difficult for her⁵. This, however, was not enough. Gavin acknowledges his need for a key individual who would have guided him during his school years and instituted firmer boundaries⁶. The need for guidance was particularly pertinent for Gavin as he did not have a father who could act as a role model. Although Ralph recognises that his parents were strict and that this kept him from engaging in occupations such as gangsterism, their 'strictness' did not help him to engage differently with occupations such as school⁷. Gavin recognises that the lack of guidance during his younger years meant that he participated in ways that did not benefit his future. Nobody recognised his need for a particular form of support⁸. Some of the participants' academic difficulties at school went unrecognised, resulting in school dropout⁹.

The lack of appropriate and relevant support for participants was further undermined by the fact that they were expected to take responsibility for their occupational participation very early on in their lives¹⁰. Their stage of development and the contextual realities that they faced made it very difficult for them to do this.

Gavin and Ralph met their champions later on in their lives. Gavin met Johnnie Jillespie at Fellow Fabrics and Ralph met Miss Fiela Adams through the opportunity to do some casual work for her at Olivia Primary. These individuals recognised that these participants deserved an opportunity. Although the participants do not make this explicit in the telling of their stories, it becomes evident through the way in which these champions sought further opportunities for these participants. For example, Johnnie Jillespie invited Gavin to attend his church where there were opportunities for him to become involved in the church structures. Through this opportunity, Gavin began his journey to become a pastor. Fiela Adams kept looking for further opportunities for Ralph to become involved in various work occupations at Olivia Primary. Eventually

she secured a permanent position for Ralph as a groundsman¹¹. These champions established access to what I have termed the participants' 'anchoring occupations'.

Anchoring occupations create opportunities to realise possibilities

Anchoring occupations were accessed as a result of the presentation of opportunities in the context as mediated by a champion. This was the case for Gavin and Ralph. The way in which the anchoring occupations shaped these participants' lives through their inherent properties is of importance. Different work occupations played the role of the anchoring occupation in the different participants' lives. Ralph became a full-time, permanent groundsman at Olivia Primary. Gavin became the pastor of a church. These occupations possessed certain attributes which operated convergently, anchoring the participants' occupational trajectories. They provided the participants with a sense of occupational identity, a sense of purpose, and a sense of belonging. Occupations developed into anchoring occupations over time and were dependent on the way in which the participant engaged with the opportunity once it was made available. They created opportunities for further 'doing' and structured the participant's participation.

- *Anchoring occupations shape occupational identity*

Anchoring occupations shaped the participants' views and understanding of themselves, contributing to their sense of identity. This played a role in constructing and orienting their occupational identity at these points in their lives. Ralph began to think of himself differently, as an individual who held power in his immediate context and who was able to bring about change¹². He saw himself as an upstanding member of his community who was able to do the right thing and provide for his family in line with his views regarding what a man should be able to do¹³. Gavin began to know himself more intimately through participation in his anchoring occupation. When he faced the decision regarding which career to pursue, he was able to make this choice easily due to his developing view of himself and the path he wished his life to follow¹⁴.

- *Anchoring occupations provide a sense of purpose and belonging*

These two participants were able to experience a sense of purpose through their involvement in these anchoring occupations. Gavin's sense of purpose evolved as a result of his spirituality and the belief that he was a part of God's plan¹⁵. Ralph

understood his purpose as being related to the way in which he played a vital role in the school community¹⁶.

A sense of belonging developed through the participants' involvement in anchoring occupations. For Gavin, this sense of belonging had been missing in his family life for a long time and was something that he had been searching for. The participants' experience of this sense of belonging served to ground their participation and resulted in extended periods of participation in these anchoring occupations¹⁷. These extended periods compounded the anchoring influence of the occupations concerned. It took a number of years for both of these participants to attain their full status in these occupations, as a full-time groundsman and pastor. This seemed to prepare them for when the opportunity for more exclusive participation emerged.

- *Anchoring occupations provided satisfaction and fulfilment*

Access to anchoring occupations influenced the participants' sense of satisfaction with their lives. Both Gavin and Ralph expressed their satisfaction with where they were in relation to these anchoring occupations¹⁸. Although Clino suggests that he is satisfied with his life as a whole, he also illustrates his dissatisfaction with certain aspects¹⁹. This could potentially be the result of the lack of an anchoring occupation in his life at the time of data collection.

Difficulty harnessing opportunities compromises what's possible

Particular individual and contextual limits made it difficult for the participants to harness certain opportunities for current and future occupational participation.

- *Lack of formal qualifications*

Participants had particular limits placed on their capacity as a result of their lack of education. Given these limits, they were realistically only able to access certain kinds of work opportunities over time. Although Clino and Ralph completed the basic education phase, this did not enable them to access further opportunities for education or employment. Gavin should have been worse off since he dropped out in primary school. However, since he was afforded the opportunity to study at the Christian Congregational Church, he developed the skills he needed to eventually become a

pastor. Clino acknowledges the importance of holding qualifications when seeking employment and in attempting to create his own employment opportunities. He illustrates the way in which a lack of qualifications has impacted on the way in which he can access opportunities²⁰. The opportunity to gain certain skills impacted on opportunities for future occupational participation.

- *Coloured identity*

The participants gave voice to the fact that their coloured identity meant that not much was expected of them and that opportunities to progress were limited²¹. Education did not seem to be valued for coloured people living in Lavender Hill. This was evident in the lack of fervent opposition from parents/guardians to participants leaving school early. The view that coloured people in Lavender Hill would build a career, and that they possessed the potential to do so, was not evident.

- *Exploitation*

The exploitation that the participants experienced prevented them from benefitting maximally from opportunities. Exploitation was experienced in relation to work occupations. It appears that the participants' status as coloured men from Lavender Hill, with little formal education, meant that employers found it easy to exploit them by not paying them appropriately for good work, not concerning themselves with their development as staff members, and 'using' them if, and when, necessary in a haphazard fashion. Clino experienced exploitation in terms of the way he seemed to be treated by some of his employers. According to Clino many of them were rude and did not treat him with respect. This influenced the way in which he was able to engage with these opportunities, as it created hostile work environments. The way in which he responded to these situations meant that he lost many work occupations prematurely²². Ralphie was exploited when he worked at the docks, during his work for Mr Owen, and when he worked for contractors prior to his full-time employment at Olivia Primary. During his time as a contract worker at the docks, he was trained to work in the French Polishing section, but when there was an opportunity for full-time employment in this section he was not offered this opportunity. When Ralphie worked for Mr Owen, he was paid a small amount of money to work exceptionally hard. When he did some contract work for an external company at Olivia Primary, he was never paid for the work that he

completed²³. The possibility exists here that his own response might have contributed to the problems that he experienced. Further to this, he was taken advantage of when he enrolled for a course that was a scam²⁴. Although slightly different, Gavin's work at the garage could be considered a form of exploitation since he was too young to be working and should have been in school. Although the owner of the garage sent his own children to school, he never questioned why Gavin was not in school²⁵. Since it was seen as a good thing to be working in Lavender Hill at any age, his early employment was never questioned by any adults in his life.

Clino explains the reason for the participants' exploitation:

"...hulle weet mos dat hulle't [employers] nie vir os nodig nie, os het vir hulle nodig..."

["...they know that they don't need us, but we need them..."]

- *The limits of social networks*

Opportunities for occupational participation were accessed largely through the participants' social networks²⁶. This operated in both a positive and a limiting fashion. Without these social networks, the participants would have been out of work for the most part²⁷. However, the options for occupational participation that these social networks were able to provide was limited because of the social and historical attributes of the community of Lavender Hill. The fact that Lavender Hill is a poor community meant that the large majority of the participants' social networks could only provide the participants with access to working-class occupations.

In conclusion, this category has highlighted the mechanisms associated with the realm of possibility. What is possible for participants is primarily dependent on the presence of a champion and the resulting provision of certain opportunities for occupational participation. Anchoring occupations play a significant role in expanding what is possible. Individual and contextual factors limit the participants' capacity to harness certain opportunities for occupational participation effectively.

Category 3

“Dit kan beter wees” [It can be better]:

Shifts in Participation

[Please refer to Appendix H for supporting quotes]

The third category explores the mechanisms by which shifts in participation came about altering the participants’ occupational participation at particular points in time. These mechanisms were comprised of both individual and contextual factors, which shaped the way in which change in the participants’ occupational trajectories was able to occur. The facets of **“Dit kan beter wees”** *[it can be better]* are captured in Figure 5 below.

FIGURE 5: *“DIT KAN BETER WEES” [it can be better]*

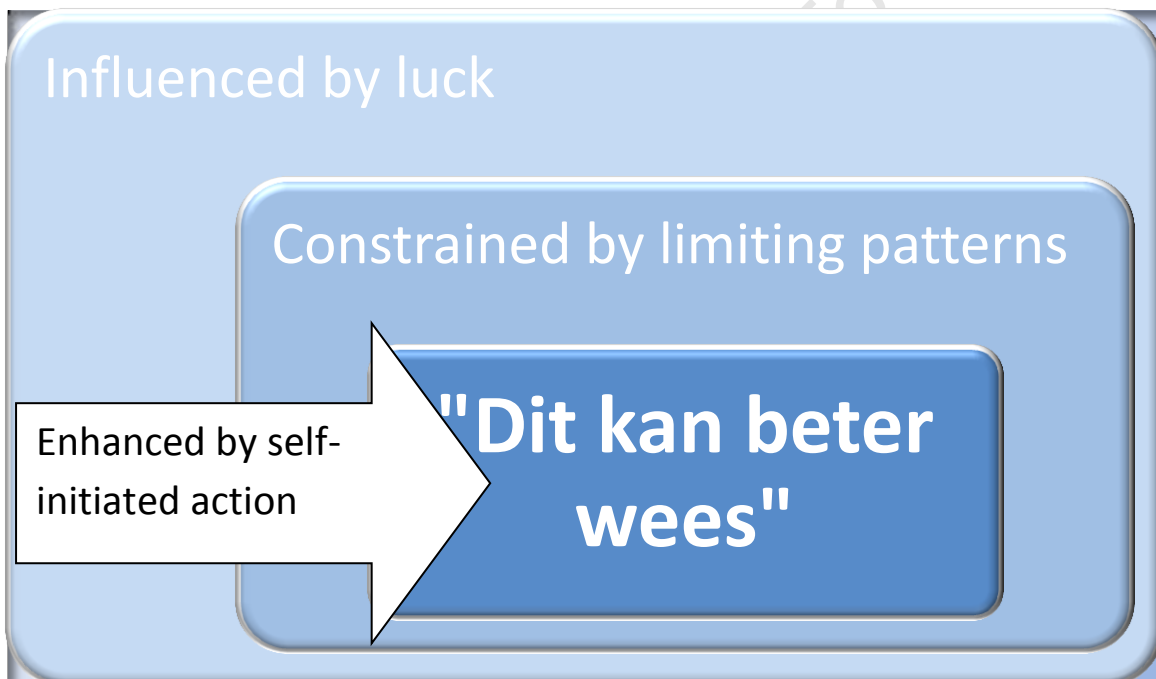


Figure 5 illustrates that the possibility for shifts in participation, which occur both before and after the participants dropped out of school, is influenced predominantly by luck, but are also constrained by the manifestation of self-limiting patterns in the participants’ lives. However, shifts in participation may be enhanced by self-initiated action taken by participants during the course of their lives.

The influence of luck

The research stories of the three participants suggest that the way in which opportunities for occupational participation were presented was as a result of luck. The participants were fortunate to find opportunities for occupational participation that they were not looking for at the time. These opportunities enabled them to shift their participation in various ways. The research stories illustrate the positive role that luck played in accessing opportunities for participation. For example, Ralphi was only able to access the opportunity to participate in the angling club as a result of being in the right place at the right time¹. He displayed skill in the occupation of fishing, but he did not have the opportunity prior to this occasion to further this participation. Involvement in this club created opportunities for enhancing his angling skills². Subsequently, it enabled him to experience a variety of rich encounters. The inception of Ralphi's participation in dancing at a very young age also began as a result of luck³. His participation in these occupations created further opportunities for beneficial gain. For example, Ralphi's participation in dancing and angling competitions allowed him to benefit experientially and financially.

The participants accessed many of their opportunities for employment per chance. Ralphi happened to be in the right place at the right time, which ensured that he was lucky in accessing his first job at the docks⁴. Further to this, Ralphi's access to the employment opportunity at Olivia Primary was only as a result of his son being in the class of a teacher who was looking for people to work at that time⁵. Clino was often involved in one kind of employment when, through good fortune, a different opportunity presented itself⁶. Gavin's access to certain opportunities came about as a result of a fortunate encounter with his champion.

Related to the concept of accessing opportunities as a result of luck, is the role that the participants played in responding to these opportunities. It became evident that the participants needed to be open to the possibility of an opportunity presenting itself at any given point in time. The way in which Ralphi responded to the opportunity to work at the docks illustrates the way in which the participants were open to opportunities as they came along. Although Ralphi was not expecting to access such an opportunity, he took the opportunity eagerly. Clino struggled to maintain the opportunities he was

presented with, but initially he too responded eagerly to each opportunity. The way in which he collated his curriculum vitae was one such example of this. Clino was desperate to participate in a productive occupation at various points in his life and this fuelled the way in which he approached productive opportunities⁷. This enthusiasm was, however, tempered by his own attitude which limited him at times.

This brings us to the way in which limiting patterns in the participants' lives often denied them the possibility for shifts in occupational participation. It was possible for these limiting patterns to operate at a personal and a collective level.

The influence of limiting patterns

There were times when the way in which the participants approached certain opportunities interfered with the development of the opportunity in question and its potential future benefits.

The participants had to choose to settle for any opportunity that presented itself, rather than planning for and seeking the opportunities that might enable them to achieve their dreams. This might be linked to the limits placed on the possibilities available to them as a result of, primarily, living in Lavender Hill, and also dropping out of school. Settling for any opportunity resulted in the decision to take on occupations that were immediately and easily available in the local context because of the immediate gains that they offered. The participants often did not see or were not given any other options for participation. This resulted in the development of an occupational trajectory that was based largely on what the participants felt was realistically possible. For example, Ralphie did not appear to see other potential opportunities that could have come about for him through participation in his dancing and angling occupations. Clino might have become an architect. He did not pursue this goal as a result of the way in which he viewed his situation at the time⁸. Gavin was aware that there was something missing in his life in his younger years, but was not fully aware about how to go about making changes in order to ensure that his life was on a path of his choosing. The reorientation of his occupational participation was only made possible through his encounter with Johnnie Jillespie.

It appears that it was difficult for the participants to use the skills they gained through previous occupational participation to assist them in accessing other occupational participation. For example, Clino learnt much through his work at Needles, but did not access another opportunity in this field thereafter. Ralphie gained skills in French Polishing, but did not access further employment using these skills as a base⁹. Gavin developed skills as a plumber during his short employment opportunity alongside his uncle; however, this did not enable him to access further plumbing opportunities.

The perceived need to take on any opportunity for participation necessitated becoming a jack of all trades rather than a specialist in any specific type of work occupation. The participants' socio-economic status played a key role in determining how they viewed what they needed to do at particular points in their lives. As the men in their households, they carried the burden of ensuring they could provide for their own and their families' subsistence needs once they were adults and were often forced to take on the first opportunity for productive participation that emerged. The lack of financial resources also meant that they often stopped participating in key opportunities that would have furthered their own development. For example, Clino and Gavin illustrate that a part of the reason for choosing to leave school was connected to having to or wanting to contribute to the household income¹⁰. Although the participants acknowledged that they might have used this as an excuse to leave, one cannot deny the difficulties that they faced as a result of their poor living circumstances. This continued to impact on the way in which they approached other opportunities that were presented. Gavin had an opportunity to return to a college to complete his schooling, but he still chose work over school¹¹.

Apart from this, the participants did not always acknowledge their own contribution to some of the difficulties that they faced. This influenced the possible benefit from opportunities for occupational participation. On a collective level, various forms of interpersonal competition played a role in mediating access to opportunities for and within occupational participation. Interpersonal competition in the community of Lavender Hill meant that anyone who was seen to be better than anyone else at a particular skill was not permitted to demonstrate this. If they did, they were ostracised from a particular social circle. This served to keep the participants from developing their potential further.

Clino explained this in the following way:

“Soos sê nou, Liesl is mos nou obviously nie a coloured nie, maar nou sê maar nou Liesl is a coloured ne, en Liesl doen iets voor Liesl se baas nou, verstaan, nou obviously wil Liesl nou baas impress nou met wat Liesl doen. Nou kom ek en ek wil vir Liesl reghelp en sê vir Liesl, nee man doen it so! Dan it sal kwaaier lyk so en dit gaan beter lyk, dan gat Liesl mos nou obviously dink, jy wil nou vir my a kleintjie maak nou, voor die baas en al daai. So daai is waar die conflict inkom...”

[“So say now, Liesl is obviously not a coloured, but say now Liesl is a coloured, and Liesl is doing something in front of her boss, understand, now obviously Liesl wants to impress her boss with what she is doing. Now I come along and I want to help Liesl get it right and I say to Liesl no man do it this way! Then it will look cooler and better, then Liesl will obviously think that I am making her look small in front of the boss and all of that. So that is where the conflict comes in...”]

Interpersonal competition was evident for Clino when he was interacting with other coloured people. It interfered with his ability to access opportunities for productive participation¹².

Shifts in participation are enhanced by self-initiated action

When a participant initiated independent action in situating their occupational trajectories it served to put them on a path where they were more likely to come into contact with opportunities that could influence their occupational engagement positively. This was relevant in Gavin's case. At certain points in his life he demonstrated the capacity to begin to work towards creating a different life trajectory through modifying his participation patterns¹³. Further to this, the ability to take hold of and use certain opportunities for occupational participation appeared to be linked to the participant's age. For Clino and Ralphie, shifts in participation appeared more likely to occur later on in their lives as they began to contribute to the positive development of their occupational trajectory through more carefully planned actions.

The participants' experience of their occupational role demands within fatherhood created a situation where they were eager to engage with the opportunities that were presented. In certain instances, engaging in the occupation of fatherhood shaped the way in which the participants internalised their need to be productive citizens. Ralphie

saw the need to be a provider and so did Gavin. Clino's participation began to shift as a result of the way in which he came to conceptualise his role as a father. He thought more actively about his contribution at home before succumbing to the pressure of his peer group¹⁴.

This category has highlighted the mechanisms by which shifts in occupational participation are controlled. It appears that shifts towards a different, more stable future for the participants are strongly influenced by luck and the ability to respond to these opportunities in helpful ways. Further to this, opportunities to shift participation are constrained by limiting patterns at a personal and collective level or enhanced by self-initiated action.

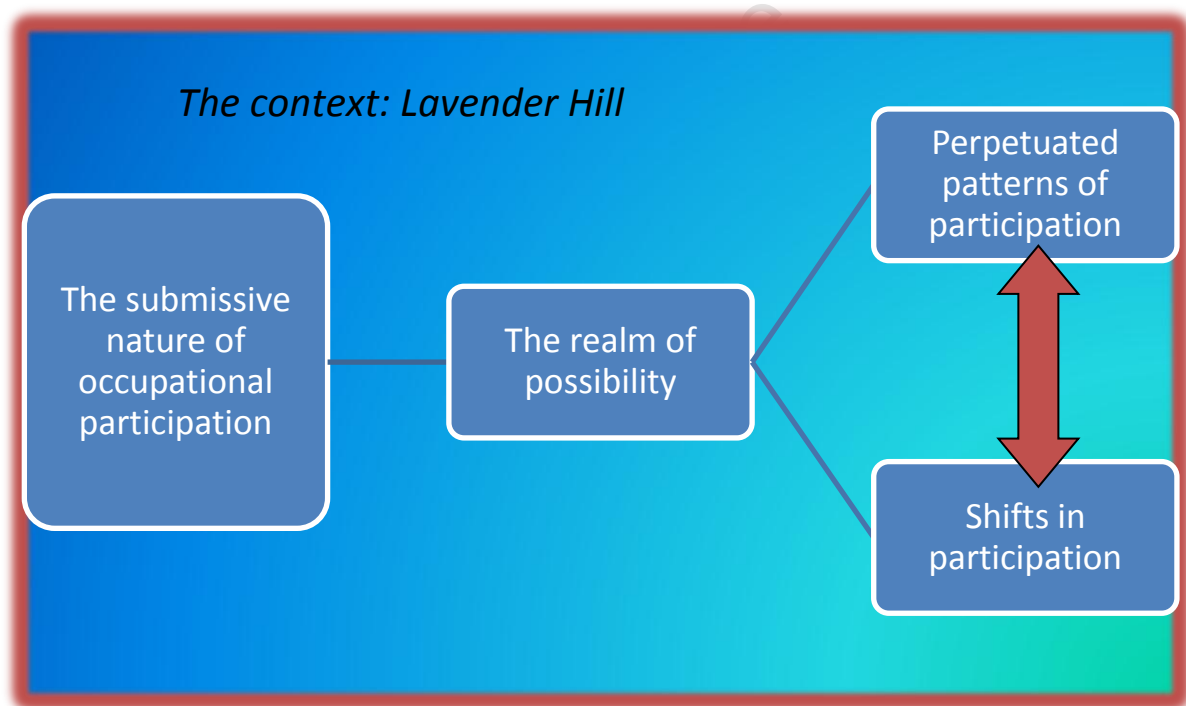
University of Cape Town

OVERARCHING THEME

THE SUBMISSIVE NATURE OF OCCUPATIONAL PARTICIPATION

The overarching theme illustrates the nature of the participants' occupational participation. The theme is apparent in the intersections of the previously-presented categories. These intersections offer a view of the occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill which indicates that their participation is submissive in nature. An explanation of the intersections between the categories illuminates this submission. Figure 6 demonstrates the relationships between the categories that culminate in the submissive nature of occupational participation.

FIGURE 6: CATEGORICAL INTERSECTIONS CULMINATING IN SUBMISSIVE OCCUPATIONAL PARTICIPATION



I adopt the philosophical belief that the nature of an entity is never separate from the entity itself and view the nature of occupational participation as an inherent part of the participants' participation and vice versa. The three categories speak to the way in which the participants' occupational participation is constructed. Men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school demonstrate perpetuated patterns of participation after dropping out, which are linked to their participation prior to dropping out. These

patterns of participation can change, but various factors that I have elaborated on in category 3 make this possible or impossible. Equally so, consolidated patterns of participation often serve to prevent shifts in this participation from occurring. The realm of possibility is held captive by the usual ways of participating for men who drop out of school in this community, as well as by the mechanisms by which these men shift this participation. This realm is formed through the interplay of the factors elaborated on in categories 1 and 2 with the factors associated with the realm of possibility itself. It is thus the constitution of the realm of possibility which is predominantly responsible for the submissive nature of the occupational participation of the participants. The participants are forced to submit their participation in accordance with what is possible for them.

The realm of possibility is caught up within a variety of complex and dynamic processes which influence what is possible in terms of occupational participation. The significant influence of serendipity in directing the life courses of the participants and whether their unfolding occupational trajectories will be experienced as positive or negative lies at the heart of this complexity. The occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school is thus submissive to serendipity and its associated factors, which include the need to respond to chance in particular ways in order to derive positive benefits for participation. The context of Lavender Hill, eminently present in the discussion of each of the categories, acts as a 'container' for occupational participation, inevitably playing an exceptional role in shaping its nature. The context of Lavender Hill is inextricably linked to the occupational participation of the participants. The important factors which shape the submissive nature of this occupational participation will be explicated in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

In this chapter I present a discussion of the findings. I extend on the description/analysis of the overarching theme and offer an interpretation of what I regard as the key factors that shape the theme in particular ways. In doing so, the manner in which men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school participate is described in relation to the factors which influence this participation. I thus provide an explanation for how and why their occupational participation 'looks' a certain way and theorise about the participation that might occur after an occupational transition such as school dropout. I use relevant literature in this chapter to both support and appropriately situate the findings of this study, drawing links where necessary to what was presented in Chapter 2. Since occupational science constructs a theoretical base by drawing on various disciplines, I draw here on relevant literature from sociology, education and psychology, as well as occupational therapy and occupational science in order to make sense of the findings. I refer to 'the men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school' as 'the school dropouts' in this text. This is in no way meant to be derogatory, but simply serves to make the text more readable. Continuing in this vein, the terms 'occupational participation' and 'participation' are used interchangeably and considered to mean the same thing.

The overarching theme, "the submissive nature of occupational participation", is given life through the categories and their intersections, which have been presented in Chapter 5. However, these intersections are complex and, as a result, difficult to tease out. This complexity provides the basis for the multifaceted character of the submissive nature of the school dropouts' participation. This nature cannot be attributed to one single factor, but exists rather in the manifestation and interplay of a number of contributing factors. These factors shape and are shaped by the submissive nature of the school dropouts' participation. The process is thus an iterative one.

In making apparent the factors which shape the participation of the school dropouts, we must begin with a single, obvious, but essentially necessary question: *to what does the participation of these school dropouts submit?* This chapter attempts to answer this

question through explicating what I interpret to be the *three core factors* that shape the school dropouts' occupational participation. I conclude by considering the way in which these factors coalesce to ensure the perpetuation of the submissive participation of the school dropouts over time. This occurs through the process of what has been termed 'place integration,' rather than 'occupational adaptation' which had previously been documented as being of prime importance following an occupational transition (Jonsson, 2010; Pettican & Prior, 2011).

6.1 Submission: a vigorous interplay of three core factors

In considering the interrelatedness of the categories that emerged in the second level analysis and which are presented in Chapter 5, I interpret the school dropouts' participation to submit to the following three factors:

1. The concept of 'chance' as an overwhelming shaper of the occupational trajectory.
2. The use of sagacity or a 'proxy-sagacity'.
3. Collective historical identity and personal occupational history.

Although it is impossible to read the influence of each of these factors separately, I will present each in turn for the sake of explanation and clarity. I discuss the co-dependence of these factors by drawing links between them. Subsequent to this, I offer an interpretation of the adjustment of the school dropouts to this occupational transition in relation the process of place integration. I consider the school dropouts' experience of this occupational transition as being influenced by the possibility that they may experience occupational reconciliation.

6.1.1 The concept of 'chance' as an overwhelming shaper of the occupational trajectory

The findings revealed, most astonishingly, that the concept of chance was a key contributing factor in shaping the occupational participation of the school dropouts, both at particular points in time and over time. 'Chance', in this instance, is considered to be the lucky and coincidental presentation of an opportunity for participation. The influence of this factor is astonishing because I have always held a view of a world in which people are predominantly in control of their life trajectories. The fact that the

school dropouts' participation is so dependent on the whims of chance creates a situation which I believe to be tenuous in terms of the opportunities that the school dropouts have to shape life outcomes through their occupational participation.

'Chance' appears to work in combination with a defining set of circumstances that create the experience of serendipity for the school dropouts. These circumstances will be elaborated on in the discussion about the role that sagacity plays in the submissive nature of occupational participation. Although the likelihood of a particular opportunity presenting itself is a difficult entity to predict, the occupational trajectories of the school dropouts indicate that positive outcomes seem to be largely attributable to whether or not chance presents particular kinds of opportunities for participation.

Shanahan & Porfeli (2007) indicate that chance events have previously received very little attention in life course research, mostly due to the fact that their implications are commonly speculative. This makes it difficult to attribute any particular outcome to such events. Further to this, Lieblich, Zilber and Tuval-Maschiach (2008) illustrate that people are not likely to attribute outcomes in their lives as being the result of chance when constructing their life stories. Contrary to this, however, the school dropouts in Lavender Hill do tend to view their occupational trajectories as being the cumulative result of factors that are largely outside of their own control. Since they view their participation, and its possible related positive outcomes, in this way, their participation submits to the role that chance plays in shaping their occupational trajectories.

In accordance with this, and of particular significance in shaping occupational participation positively, is the role that anchoring occupations play in the lives of the school dropouts. As has been illustrated in Chapter 5, anchoring occupations are initiated and constructed through chance encounters with key individuals who campaign for the school dropouts. The establishment of anchoring occupations thus depends on mere chance encounters creating a situation where the possibility for significant changes in occupational participation must submit to this influence. However, it must be acknowledged that, once established, the anchoring occupations serve to create further opportunities for participation. Their benefits have been illustrated in Chapter 5 and, given their inherent worth, it is particularly concerning that their emergence occurs largely as a result of chance. Anchoring occupations appear to

parallel what Jonsson named 'engaging occupations' in his study on retirement (Jonsson, 2010). Engaging occupations promoted a positive adjustment to retirement and played a distinguishable role in shaping the adaptive process after this occupational transition (Jonsson, 2010). Similarly, anchoring occupations for the school dropouts served to resituate their occupational trajectories, significantly shaping their life courses and outcomes in positive ways.

In examining the role that chance played in shaping occupational participation, I do not preclude the essential realisation of the role of the agency of the school dropouts. The opportunity to challenge the submissive nature of their occupational participation came about as a consequence of the way in which the school dropouts engaged directly with the anchoring occupation once it was firmly established. Borrowing from Giddens's (1984) definition of agency, I purport that the school dropouts' ability to establish anchoring occupations, using them to influence their lives positively, is as a direct result of the structure of the occupation itself and the opportunities it provided within the context of Lavender Hill. As the school dropouts begin to act purposefully within the boundaries of the anchoring occupation, they shape notions of themselves as occupational beings. This influences their occupational identities positively. Perhaps the reason why many school dropouts in South Africa emphasise that they experience their lives as prisoners (Instant Grass, 2007) is because they lack an anchoring occupation which could change the face of their own occupational participation. Although perhaps a bold claim, the school dropouts' occupational trajectories do, in fact, appear to be constrained until they are set free through the act of participating in anchoring occupations, which changes the way that they view themselves. Opportunities to establish anchoring occupations that shape the occupational identities of the school dropouts are promoted or constrained by chance. Although not all aspects of occupational identity are directly related to anchoring occupations, they have been shown to be powerful forces in this regard. Since anchoring occupations, as with engaging occupations (Jonsson, 2010), seem to be situated predominantly in the work-related sphere, we could assume that the nature of the anchoring occupation itself plays a role. As Unruh (2004) points out, people most often define who they are in relation to their work occupation.

The influence of an occupational transition on the construction of an occupational identity has been highlighted in previous research (Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2007). The fact that adolescents are in a life stage characterised by transition and a heavy focus on the ongoing search for an identity (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2008) may play a role in the intersection of the construction of the school dropouts' occupational identity and the process of dropping out of school. In contrast to the Vrkljan & Miller Polgar (2007) study, which focused on elderly people with a well-consolidated occupational identity, the school dropouts' occupational identities during adolescence would most certainly be in a state of flux at the point of transition. This would influence both the way in which the school dropouts view the occupational transition of dropping out of school and their perspective of their own participation subsequent to this transition. This may be one of the reasons why they do not acknowledge the occupational transition of dropping out of school as being a significant factor in the process of the construction of their occupational identity. Although the school dropouts do not attach significance to the role that the occupational transition of dropping out of school plays in their lives, the findings suggest that dropping out, alongside a multitude of other complex factors, does play a role in shaping their participation and, ultimately, their occupational identity. It has been illustrated elsewhere that people who drop out of school in South Africa may experience a poverty of occupational participation (Instant Grass, 2007), which would contribute to the process of shaping their occupational identity.

Construction of the school dropouts' occupational identities is influenced positively through participation in anchoring occupations. The timing of the emergence of these anchoring occupations is tied to chance, which means that the opportunity often appears only to emerge later in their lives. The opportunity to construct a more positive occupational identity sooner may therefore be compromised. In saying that, however, I acknowledge the potential of chance to present such an opportunity sooner. Simultaneously, it is possible that the emergence of opportunities to participate in anchoring occupations only later on in the school dropouts' lives may be purely coincidental or as a result of particular determinants. I argue that the age of the school dropouts intersects with chance to produce a particular outcome. Fine & Deegan (1996) quote Charles Nicolle to illustrate that "chance favours only those who know how to court her" (p. 435). It seems then that advancing age in adulthood might provide the

basis for the school dropouts to act agentically as a result of what Giddens (1984) called the capacity to consider one's actions reflexively. This would then enable them, in taking advantage of the opportunities that chance presents, to plot a directed and more rewarding occupational trajectory. The relationship between age and experience has been shown to have the potential to influence the development of wisdom positively (Staudinger, 1999). Critical reflection and internalisation of these experiences is, however, also a necessary precursor for developed wisdom (Staudinger, 1999). Spirituality may therefore play a key role in the development of a wiser stance towards presented opportunities, since its practice enables an individual to reflect on their place in life (Urbanowski & Vargo, 1994). Certainly the school dropouts appear more able to take up and use presented opportunities as they approach the middle years of adulthood and when they employ a spiritually-based reasoning towards events that occur.

To know when and how to capitalise on the opportunities chance provides is, I believe, sanctioned by a particular form of agency. Fine & Deegan (1996) show that previous authors have named this skilled process 'sagacity', which is the wisdom and insight that needs to be employed in order to take advantage of chance (Fine & Deegan, 1996). This brings me to the second factor which I interpret to shape the submissive nature of the school dropouts' occupational participation: that of *the use of sagacity or a proxy-sagacity*. Although I construct this factor separately from chance, I emphasise that it must be read as an inseparable aspect of the way in which chance influences the submission of participation. Chance and sagacity coalesce to produce serendipity, which is a major contributor to the construction of the submissive nature of the occupational participation of the school dropouts.

6.1.2 The use of 'sagacity' or a 'proxy-sagacity'

The necessity of the use of sagacity in taking advantage of chance provides further support for the argument that the school dropouts' occupational participation is submissive in nature. The findings illustrate that the school dropouts do not always demonstrate the capacity to manage chance events in a way that benefits their participation. Interestingly, they did appear able to employ sagacity in relation to preventing their own participation in commonplace occupations in their context such as gangsterism. The school dropouts appear able to consider strategically the manner in

which possible participation in such occupations would influence them negatively, even when such occupations are attractive options. Conflictingly, however, the use of appropriate sagacity in taking advantage of opportunities in relation to the chances that are presented seems to be largely absent. The opportunity for more rewarding occupational participation might, therefore, simply pass a school dropout by without him even knowing it. This increases the potential for a lack of sagacity to constrain the occupational trajectories of the school dropouts, because if they were not insightful enough to capitalise on certain opportunities, they would not have expounded on them in the telling of their life stories. This relates to the difficulties associated with measuring the impact of chance on life trajectories (Bandura, 1982; Shanahan & Porfeli, 2007). The necessity and importance of sagacity being both present and utilised emphasises the submission of occupational participation to this factor. The use of sagacity may be a challenge for the school dropouts in Lavender Hill because, as Fine & Deegan (1996) point out, the possibility of realising that a chance may be capitalised on is near impossible if the person concerned does not realise that the opportunity itself is a possibility for them. This is particularly salient where the school dropouts in Lavender Hill are concerned, because of a collective historical identity which shapes what they believe is possible in relation to their social positions. This will be elaborated on in the next section. Therefore, although the school dropouts show the capacity to act with agency, they do not necessarily demonstrate the capacity to be sagacious. This is, in all probability, linked to the contextual dimensions which structure the way in which the school dropouts think about possibilities.

Ironically, chance encounters in the school dropouts' lives led to the use of what I have called a 'proxy-sagacity'. A proxy-sagacity is the insight and wisdom required for the school dropouts to capitalise on an opportunity, in the form of another individual. This individual was described as a champion in the findings. The notion that another individual could provide what is usually thought of as a personal capacity is unusual, but relevant nonetheless. It would appear that, for the champion to operate effectively as the 'proxy-sagacity', the school dropout would need to be susceptible to his/her influence because he liked him/her. This is most certainly the case where school dropouts are fortunate enough to meet their champions. They feel an affinity towards these individuals which creates a sense of openness on their part as new opportunities

emerge in relation to their champion. Bandura emphasises the importance of social and emotional ties in enabling the capitalisation of opportunities (Bandura, 1982).

I acknowledge that some who read this might prefer to refer to the proxy-sagacity as social support or mentorship. Although this might be one very valid way of interpreting this situation, I view the proxy-sagacity as slightly different to what might be considered usual social support. The proxy-sagacity operates in relation to chance and often emerges as a result of chance. This champion is astute in considering, strategically, the end-in-view for the particular school dropout in question. This makes their role in the school dropouts' lives much more keenly felt and valued. Their absence is notable. The fact that the school dropouts' participation submits in different ways to their presence or absence is indicative of the power that they wield. This is particularly pertinent in considering the substantial influence that champions hold in providing access to an anchoring occupation.

I have illustrated earlier in this section that the school dropouts in Lavender Hill do not appear to be well positioned to take advantage of chances as they emerge. Of course, the question of importance then is why this seems to be the case. Illuminating both the personal histories of the school dropouts and their collective historical identity will generate some insight into the reasons for this. It feels appropriate to turn to a discussion of these factors at this particular point.

6.1.3 Personal occupational history and collective historical identity

Personal occupational history and collective historical identity emerge as significant influencers of the nature of the school dropouts' occupational participation. Providing the context for much of the school dropouts' participation, these factors play a crucial role in the occupations that manifest over the school dropouts' lives. In a transactional view of occupation, context is emphasised as being about more than simply the environment that a person acts on (Aldrich, 2008). As such, personal occupational history and collective historical identity are part of the very essence of the occupations in which the school dropouts engage, contributing in multiple, consistent and encompassing ways to the enactment of submissive occupational participation. For the purposes of this discussion, personal occupational history is considered to be the individual-level participation choices of the school dropouts within and between

occupations, before and after the occupational transition of dropping out of school. The findings of this study are suggestive of the fact that later participation of the school dropouts mirrors previous participation. Further to this, the personal occupational history also presents as a mirror of the collective historical identity. I therefore begin by discussing the collective historical identity, after which I discuss personal occupational history and its intersections with collective historical identity.

6.1.3.1 Collective historical identity

The collective historical identity of the community of Lavender Hill owes its character predominantly to the racialised history of South Africa. Apartheid, as a system of racial division and accompanying social ills, ominously challenged what futures were possible for coloured men in South Africa. Its legacy continues to do so in that it remains a substantial contributing factor to the occupational trajectories of the school dropouts in Lavender Hill. The fact that Apartheid ideology remains as a strong presence in the construction of coloured youths' identities in South Africa has been exemplified (Soudien, 2001). I thus interpret Apartheid and its legacy to be an all-encompassing presence in the construction of the occupational participation of men who drop out of school in Lavender Hill.

History's influence on occupational participation has not been well articulated in occupational science and occupational therapy literature. Although Wilcock (1998) provides an evolutionary perspective of the occupational participation of mankind, her account is not specific to a particular context or based on current research. The first South African occupational science researcher to elucidate this singularly important factor and its influence more substantially was Galvaan in her critical ethnography of the occupational choices of young adolescents in post-Apartheid Lavender Hill (Galvaan, 2010). Galvaan asserts that South Africa's political history predicates certain patterns of participation for young adolescents in Lavender Hill through its influence on their occupational choices. This predication is born out of the social structures that influence the daily participation of young adolescents (Galvaan, 2010). The notion that social structures govern action in particular ways has been elaborated on elsewhere (Bourdieu, 1990) and has been applied to understanding occupation as a form of social action (Cutchin, Aldrich, Luc Balliard & Coppola, 2008). Social structures are thought to

result in the formation of habits, or rather what Bourdieu calls habitus, which are sets of transposable, reproducible dispositions which structure social action and are structured by it (Bourdieu, 1990). These dispositions, formed under the conditions attributed to particular social systems, play a crucial role in the enactment of occupation on a daily basis (Swartz, 2002). I use this logic to assist me in clarifying the way in which the collective historical identity, constructed within a social system fraught with historical inequities related to race, shapes the daily occupational participation of the school dropouts in Lavender Hill.

The collective historical identity of the school dropouts is created through the structures that shape social life in Lavender Hill and South Africa. These structures shape this identity (Bourdieu, 1990) by predicating particular ways of participating (Galvaan, 2010). Drawing on the sociologist Giddens, Sewell (1992) expands on the concept of structures and their ability to influence action or, in the case of this study, participation. Sewell (1992) concurs with Giddens in emphasising the importance of both deep and superficial structures. Deep structures are thought to give rise to and encompass superficial structures (Sewell, 1992). However, Sewell provides a more nuanced account of this sociological process by emphasising the fact that superficial structures are no less important than deep structures and that both play an equally crucial role in structuring daily participation. I use these notions to describe how I see Apartheid and its legacy as a deep structure which inevitably gives rise to another deep structure – that of the working-class coloured identity. The working-class coloured identity of the school dropouts acts at a bedrock level to influence the formation of the superficial structures, which include the social relationships in Lavender Hill and, subsequent to this, the personal histories of the school dropouts. I expand on these personal histories and their intersection with the school dropouts' collective historical identity later. I begin the next sub-section with a focus on the deep structures which influence the submissive nature of the occupational participation of the school dropouts.

- *Coloured identity*

Apartheid's legislated system of racialised oppression operated in profound ways to direct the futures of different race groups in South Africa. The categorisation of different

ethnic groups into different racial classifications served the dire purpose of ensuring that, compared with white people, black, coloured, Indian and Asian people were at a substantial disadvantage in terms of access to opportunities for participation (Martin, 1996). Reddy (2001) illustrates the manner in which the politics of naming these different race groups during Apartheid has perpetuated a continued system of disadvantage for coloured people in post-Apartheid South Africa. The school dropouts in Lavender Hill thus fall prey to this system, submitting their participation in relation to it. The Population Registration Act of 1950 legislated that all people in South Africa had to be registered according to their 'racial identity'. The influence that this legislation had is subsumed within the participation constraints associated with the black, coloured, Indian and Asian racial identities that it both constructed and perpetuated. The manner in which this legislation intended to shape the life trajectories of South Africans is contained within the intention of the Act, which was purported to contain:

"...the life story of every individual [...] All those important facts regarding the life of every individual will be combined in this book and recorded under the name of a specific person, who can never change his identity. It is only when the last page in that book of life is written by an entry recording the death of such a person that the book is closed and taken out of the gallery of the living and placed in the gallery of the dead" (Brookes, 1968, p. 21 as cited in Reddy, 2001).

The life trajectory of a coloured person was thus heavily curtailed by notions of coloured identity and what it meant to be a coloured person in Apartheid South Africa. The fact that identity is ascribed and does not change until death is ominous. The vulnerability created through the identity of a school dropout as a coloured man in both Apartheid and post-Apartheid South Africa has been elaborated on in Chapter 1 and is echoed here. However, of particular importance to note is the way in which I interpret all other identities of the school dropouts to be secondary to their designation as coloured men. As Reddy (2001) notes, the politics of naming ensured this and continues to be present in post-Apartheid South Africa, making my previous statement a definitive realisation. This means that coloured male school dropouts' power to construct their own occupational trajectories freely is curtailed primarily by the notion of coloured identity in post-Apartheid South Africa. This is evident in what is possible for the school dropouts in relation to the difficulties that they inevitably face in harnessing

opportunities for participation. Both these aspects serve to initiate a process whereby the school dropouts' lives are dependent on chance because of, first and foremost, the limits placed on them as a result of identity-related factors.

At the individual level, the school dropouts contributed to their own oppression through the limiting factors which constrained the opportunity for shifts in participation to occur. Harro (2000) has illustrated the manner in which early socialisation contributes to the view of oneself and one's place in the world. This process often leads to internalised oppression for marginalised groups as they construct a view of themselves in relation to the dominant ideology (Harro, 2000). This is particularly relevant in the context of this discussion because of the way in which the school dropouts contributed to their own oppression at times, limiting what was possible in terms of occupational participation. In concurrence with a postmodern perspective, however, I attribute the reasons for these self-limiting patterns to the dominant racial ideology in South Africa and the politics of naming which has situated coloured people in Lavender Hill in a marginal social position, rendering it often impossible to make alternate choices for participation. The way in which internalised oppression contributes to the construction of occupational participation has been highlighted in previous occupational therapy research with black domestic workers in South Africa (Galvaan, 2000). Galvaan (2000) illustrates the collusion of domestic workers in their own oppression to produce a situation where they simply reconcile themselves to the constraints or opportunities of the context. This situation appears to be present for the school dropouts, given the manner in which they are required to construct their own participation in a context that favours chance and is heavily constrained within perpetuated historical disadvantage.

- *Working-class identity*

I provided evidence earlier in this thesis to suggest that Lavender Hill is a working-class community (Stats SA, 2001). Galvaan (2010) explains that the socioeconomic status of Lavender Hill is one of the factors which predicate historically-based ways of participating for young adolescents in this community. I concur with this perspective as the life stories of the school dropouts reveal the predominant influence of the ideology and constraint of the working-class identity. An important earlier ethnography has

highlighted the role that working-class culture plays in perpetuating a system of disadvantage for working-class youth that results in their entrapment within particular kinds of occupations (Willis, 1977). Although this ethnography focused on working-class youth in England in a different time period, Willis's analysis of the influence of working-class culture finds resonance with my own interpretation of the influence of this culture in the lives of the school dropouts in Lavender Hill.

The working-class culture of the school dropouts promotes acceptance by them that they will participate only in manual labour. Even when they gain other sorts of skills through previous participation, they are unable to use these skills to further their own occupational agenda. This is because, as Dickie (2004) emphasises, "culture has us before we have it" (Garrison, 2002, p. 11 as cited in Dickie, 2004). The working-class status of the school dropouts socialises them into viewing their possibilities for occupational participation in work only in relation to manual labour. Willis (1977) points out that the enactment of the working-class culture through participation in manual labour has its origins within what he calls the anti-school culture. This is particularly pertinent for the school dropouts and appears to be common across other low socioeconomic contexts where school dropout has been studied, as is evidenced in Chapter 2. The anti-school culture inherent in the life stories of the school dropouts serves to place them at an immediate disadvantage in terms of accessing future opportunities for participation. This relates to the way in which chance operates within particular constraints, which is directly related to the difficulties that the school dropouts would have in harnessing the potential possibilities for participation that might in fact be available. The school dropouts might lack the necessary skills to harness certain opportunities, such as opening their own businesses, for example, or applying for certain jobs. There are, therefore, simply some vocational opportunities that are out-of-bounds for them because of the qualifications and skills required for these opportunities.

Although it has been illustrated that the school dropouts could access opportunities for further education and training, there has been evidence to suggest that they do not (DoE, 2008). The life stories presented in this thesis concur with this perspective. This might be explained using Willis's (1977) ideas regarding the way in which working-class youth situate themselves in relation to the notion of attaining an education. Willis

(1977) shows that attaining an education does not necessarily actualise into the promise of a better life with more rewarding participation for those concerned. In fact, he goes as far as to suggest that working-class culture "...knows better... ...what is the real state of the job market" (Willis, 1977, p. 126). This assists in explaining why the school dropouts abandon educational opportunities and is in line with their explanation of a situation in Lavender Hill where everyone lands up in the same position, whether they complete school or not. It has been illustrated in other South African research that obtaining a matric certificate does not markedly improve a youth's position in the job market (Cosser & Sehlola, 2009). It therefore appears to be logical for the school dropouts to submit their participation within the constraints of a working-class identity. This both precipitates their decision to leave school and ensures their continuing servitude to the available options for participating within working-class structures.

Perhaps the most crucial question framed by Willis (1977) is: why do working-class youth collude with their working-class cultural identity to perpetuate the system of disadvantage of which they form a part? This is particularly pertinent to this discussion as it would appear that the school dropouts in Lavender Hill willingly take on their working-class occupational status and resign themselves to an occupational trajectory characterised by working-class occupations. The findings of this study illustrate that the school dropouts have no other choice but to participate in working-class occupations - unless chance and sagacity intervene - but that they also view their contributions as important. This is because of gendered views of masculinity (Willis, 1977) and the school dropouts' perception of their role as a father and provider for their families in adulthood. The school dropouts rebutted possible opportunities to further their studies in relation to the need to obtain work in order to make an income. Participating readily and willingly in the perpetuation of a working-class identity opened the school dropouts up to the possibility of being exploited by employers who knew that other options for employment were limited. Exploitation was also shown to be a key feature in Willis's (1977) study.

- *Social group identity*

Secondary to these deep structures, but no less importantly, the influence of the immediate social context in the form of social relationships becomes apparent. Willis

(1977) makes reference to the power of the informal group in structuring choices within a working-class culture. Galvaan (2010) too highlights the important place of the peer group in structuring the participation of young adolescents in Lavender Hill. Certainly, the informal peer group holds much power in structuring the school dropouts' occupational participation before and immediately after dropping out of school, promoting in some cases the perpetuation of an anti-school culture and the exhibition of participation that may be construed as personally reckless. Associated with this, is the manner in which the peer and social group as a whole fabricates forms of interpersonal competition which prevent the emergence and discovery of further opportunities for occupational participation.

On the other hand, however, the social networks of the school dropouts are often the prime redeeming factor for them in providing access to work occupations which offer the opportunity to generate an income. Unfortunately, these networks are constrained by the working-class culture and thus serve to perpetuate, in some respects, the socialisation of the school dropouts in such a culture. This serves as a cross-generational transfer of such ideologies, ensuring the continued submission of the school dropouts' occupational participation in different historical time periods.

I now move on to discuss the influence of the school dropouts' personal occupational histories as they interface with the collective historical identity of Lavender Hill.

6.1.3.2 Personal occupational history

As explained earlier, personal occupational history refers to the past participation patterns of the school dropouts. It would appear that the school dropouts repeat their own occupational histories over time in relation to their manifest participation patterns. In explaining the reasons for this, I draw on Bourdieu's (1990) work on habitus.

The school dropouts in Lavender Hill develop ways of participating that are influenced in large part by their notion of their own role and place in their context. These dispositions operate implicitly and form part of the operating system of the habitus which guides action (Bourdieu, 1990). Due to the overwhelming influence of the context in shaping the school dropouts' dispositions, they participate in ways that they feel are appropriate for coloured working-class men in Lavender Hill. They thus act with

practical consciousness, which guides their choices for participation, both within and between occupations (Galvaan, 2010). As a result of this the school dropouts in Lavender Hill, as is the case for school dropouts in other parts of South Africa (Instant Grass, 2007), tend initially to participate in occupations that they know to be characteristic ways of engaging for youth in their communities during and after the occupational transition of dropping out of school. This way of participating may be related to 'doing nothing' and 'passing the time,' which might reflect personally-reckless participation. It could be attributable to the loss of the structuring influence of school. Although the school dropouts might look forward to being masters of their own time, they also appear to experience what Jonsson (2010) named the 'paradox of freedom' (p. 217) in relation to the loss of a significant occupation during an occupational transition. This provides an occupational perspective of what previous authors have described as a process of 'floundering' immediately after dropping out of school (Halpern, 1993; Rumberger, 1995).

The view that personal occupational history contributes in significant ways to the future participation patterns of the school dropouts is an important finding. The temporal aspect of participation is echoed in findings from other disciplines, illuminated in Chapter 2, which speak to the participation prior to and after dropout, but do not link the two time periods. The findings of this study suggest that these two time periods are in fact linked, offering support to the view that the occupational transition of dropping out of school might be conceptualised as a process. It would appear that the character of occupations in which the school dropouts participate prior to leaving school and their related occupational choices are mimicked in the character of occupations and occupational choices after they leave school. This offers support to the view that the occupations that an individual has at their disposal at the point of occupational transition impact on the manner in which an individual participates subsequent to the transition (Blair, 2000). The occupational participation of the school dropouts subsequent to the occupational transition of dropping out of school is thus submissive to their personal occupational history.

Personal occupational history also mirrors the collective historical identity of Lavender Hill in that occupational participation prior to and after dropping out is constrained within the system influencing this identity that has been elaborated on above. Although

chance and sagacity operate to extend or change the occupational trajectories of the school dropouts, the socio-historical factors associated with Lavender Hill control what chances will realistically be presented in this context. As such, the personal occupational histories of the school dropouts are perpetually bound to the collective historical identity of Lavender Hill. The participation patterns of the school dropouts thus appear to be immovable over time unless they are operated on by the unlikely coincidence of chance and sagacity coalescing to create a serendipitous situation for the school dropout in question. This heavy reliance on unlikely elements compounds the submissive nature of occupational participation.

6.2 Occupational marginalisation as a significant outcome of the submissive nature of the occupational participation of school dropouts

Based on my interpretation of the submissive nature of the occupational participation of the school dropouts, it would appear that this group experiences occupational marginalisation. In fact, occupational marginalisation is evident as a sort of archetype in the school dropouts' lives because of the nature of occupational participation. The experience of occupational marginalisation shapes the occupational trajectory in ways that limit its potential for growth resulting in occupational injustice. This further compounds the submissive nature of the school dropouts' participation. Occupational marginalisation limits the choices and control of the school dropouts in renegotiating their occupational repertoires subsequent to the occupational transition of dropping out of school.

It has been emphasised in previous research on occupational transitions that the process of occupational adaptation in relation to such transitions is the means by which people renegotiate their occupational repertoires (Jonsson et al, 2000; Jonsson, 2010; Vrkljan & Miller Polgar, 2011). Previous studies have elucidated the experiences of people in first world countries⁷, none of which have focused on the occupational transition of dropping out of school. This limits the application and feasibility of their findings in relation to the experience of the school dropouts in Lavender Hill. In connection with the insights that this study has generated, I therefore propose that the school dropouts do not adapt in relation to the occupational transition of dropping out

⁷ First world countries are considered to be nations with advanced economies, high standards of living and a high degree of political influence (http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/first_world.htm).

of school. Instead, as a direct result of the interplay between the submissive nature of their occupational participation and the experience of occupational marginalisation, they undergo a process of place integration over time. This, I believe, is predominantly the result of the timing of the occupational transition, which originates within the adolescent phase of life, and its situation within a particular historical time period in South Africa. Place integration has been proposed as an alternative to traditional notions of 'adaptation-to-environment' in occupational science and occupational therapy (Cutchin, 2004). It is the process of place integration which makes it possible for the school dropouts to experience their occupational participation as positive, despite what I have interpreted to be the negative aspects linked to the submissive nature of their occupational participation. This is because place integration serves as a mechanism which seeks to harmonise the various factors impacting on participation in order to choreograph a participation trajectory which is in line with the school dropouts' vision of what is possible for them. Their entwined collective historical identity and past personal occupational histories determine what is possible in the context of Lavender Hill. Even in the unlikely event of a serendipitous chance encounter, participation is always reconciled with what is believed, at a fundamentally ingrained level, to be possible for the school dropouts in this context. This resonates with and offers support for the view that, as a result of their occupational marginalisation, the school dropouts experience occupational reconciliation.

Occupational reconciliation reflects a situation in which people attempt to do their best to participate in productive and enriching ways despite the often unreasonable challenges of a particular context (Galvaan, 2000). Place integration thus serves the process of occupational reconciliation for the school dropouts and fuels the submissive nature of their participation. One cannot, therefore, refute the fact that the school dropouts participate willingly in a process that ensures their continued submission within the constraints of the context. This is possibly as a result of the internalised oppression of the school dropouts, which was mentioned previously in the discussion on the impact of collective historical identity. The complexities associated with their own contribution to this process cannot be denied when considering the way in which occupational injustice manifests and also how it can be countered. This complicity results in a situation where submissive occupational participation becomes a life

pattern for the school dropouts and, unfortunately, creates a situation where the occupational injustice that the school dropouts face appears to be impenetrable.

6.3 Conclusion

In this discussion I have highlighted the intersection of three core factors which shape both the ordinary and extra-ordinary occupational participation of the school dropouts and result in its submissive nature. These factors include the role of chance, sagacity or a proxy-sagacity, and the influence of personal occupational histories and collective historical identity. I have drawn together various aspects of the school dropouts' lives that warranted closer inspection in order to determine that the school dropouts might experience occupational marginalisation as a result of the submission of their occupational participation within these context-bound constraints and opportunities. Contrary to what might be expected, however, school dropouts experience their occupational participation and resultant occupational trajectories positively. I have asserted that this may be the result of them undergoing the process of place integration in relationship with occupational reconciliation.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Recommendations

7.1.1 Recommendations for Occupational Science

Occupational science is an evolving discipline primarily concerned with the study of the construct of occupation (Zemke & Clark, 1996). School dropout is an occupational transition that impacts upon the development of an occupational repertoire. As such, it is a transition that occupational science should grapple with more substantially in order to understand how occupation manifests for this group in different contexts, since the occupational transition of dropping out of school is a global issue.

In this study, I have introduced the concept of an anchoring occupation and emphasised its relationship to productivity. The place and use of anchoring occupations in peoples' lives could be an important area of investigation for occupational science, in relation to both occupational transitions and everyday participation.

7.1.2 Recommendations for Occupational Therapy

Recommendations for the practice of occupational therapy are as follows:

- 1) Occupational therapists working with male learners who are at risk of dropping out in schools in disadvantaged contexts should consider the need to focus on these learners' possible experiences of occupational marginalisation through the development of more enriching occupational repertoires. This might involve facilitating learners to actively engage in the pursuit of opportunities for occupational participation while they are still at school. This way of participating would then be more likely to perpetuate itself and hopefully prevent dropout from occurring or ensure similar rewarding participation after the learner has dropped out. For example, had Clino had the opportunity to engage in extramural occupations other than partying, he might have been less inclined to magnify his participation in this occupation after dropping out. His perpetuated participation would have

reflected more enriched ways of engaging. Working in this way would assist occupational therapists in working towards occupational justice.

- 2) Occupational therapists need to establish a practice arena that focuses on working with men who have dropped out of school in disadvantaged contexts. The findings have revealed that these men require external assistance in the form of a proxy-sagacity in order to successfully negotiate opportunities in their context and influence the renegotiation of their occupational repertoires positively. Occupational therapists need to employ creative strategies to assist school dropouts in this way. One such creative strategy would be to work with community members in order to develop the champions required to act as a proxy-sagacity for men who drop out. This would be beneficial in establishing access to anchoring occupations.
- 3) In relation to this, occupational therapists working in such contexts should consider the role of the parents of the school dropouts. Parents are a powerful force that could be harnessed for positive change, both in possibly preventing school dropout and in assisting their children after they have dropped out. Parents could be worked with so that they too may play the role of the champion in their children's lives. While this would assist in providing the school dropouts with the mentorship and support required to prevent them from dropping out, it would also assist them in considering the choices that they make for participation after dropping out.
- 4) Occupational therapists need to consider sagacity as a particular form of agency and its place in assisting those who drop out of school in renegotiating their occupational repertoires in relation to chance.

7.1.3 Recommendations for further study

Recommendations for further study are as follows:

- 1) The sample size in this study was very small. It is thus important to explore the general applicability of the understanding gained here. A study that uses grounded theory as the approach of choice would be beneficial to test the

suggestions generated through this research. Theory regarding the nature of the occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school could be further refined and established through this methodological approach.

- 2) A similar qualitative study could be conducted with women in Lavender Hill who drop out of school. This would provide a gendered perspective on the nature of occupational participation for the school dropouts in Lavender Hill.
- 3) A qualitative biographical study might also be conducted with men who drop out of school in affluent communities. This might assist in further refining the insights gained here by providing a comparative analysis.
- 4) A descriptive quantitative research study that focuses on the occupational participation profiles of men who drop out of school in disadvantaged contexts similar to Lavender Hill would be useful in broadening understanding regarding the nature of occupational participation for these men.
- 5) Further research is required to more fully understand the implications of sagacity for people's occupational trajectories.

7.2 Limitations

7.2.1 Scope of the study

Since this study was completed as a mini-dissertation for degree purposes, its scope was limited. Deeper findings might have emerged had the scope of the study been larger.

7.2.2 Use of biographical methodology

My own inexperience in the use of the biographical methodology might have limited the study as follows:

- When I reviewed the interview transcripts, I realised that there were some aspects of the participants' stories that I could have explored further. This was as a result of my own ability to communicate well in Afrikaans, which was the

participants' chosen language. Where possible, I explored these issues. However, rich data was generated despite this.

- The sample consisted only of men in Lavender Hill who had dropped out of school and who spoke English or Afrikaans as their first language. This has the potential to limit the theoretical insights generated through the study, as men in Lavender Hill who speak different first languages might have further enhanced our understanding of the nature of occupational participation of the school dropouts in this community. However, men who speak Afrikaans as their first language predominate in this community, and the sample therefore reflects the majority of the population.
- The way in which participants are able to recount their own life stories is influenced by their memory of these events (Denzin, 1989). This study had to rely on the participants retelling their life stories from memory, which may have implications for the veracity of the findings.

7.2.3 Sampling constraints

The key informants used in this study provided access to participants who were not involved in crime or gangsterism. It has been illustrated that many criminals are school dropouts and Lavender Hill is an area where gangsterism is a prominent occupation. It is thus a limit of this study that no criminals or gangsters were included in the study sample. These potential participants might have added valuable insights in terms of the theoretical constructs generated. The findings of this study are, however, relevant nonetheless, since it is equally important to understand the occupational participation of school dropouts who do not turn to crime or gangsterism.

7.3 Conclusion

This qualitative biographical inquiry explored the nature of the occupational participation of men in Lavender Hill who drop out of school. School dropout has been conceptualised as an occupational transition subsequent to which school dropouts must renegotiate their occupational repertoires. Their occupational participation over time has therefore been viewed in relation to the process of dropping out of school. The methodology used included multiple, rigorous analytical procedures which enabled the development of a deep understanding of the nature of occupational participation.

The key finding of this study emerged in a single overarching theme highlighting that the school dropouts' occupational participation is submissive in nature. This theme was visible in the interplay between the school dropouts' perpetuating patterns of participation and the way in which shifts in participation occurred in relation to what is possible for men who drop out of school in Lavender Hill. A critical examination of this interplay has led to an understanding of the factors to which the nature of occupational participation submits. These have been clearly explicated in Chapter 6. The implication of the submissive nature of occupational participation is occupational marginalisation, which results in place integration through a process of occupational reconciliation. The way in which occupational reconciliation is constituted means that the men who drop out of school in Lavender Hill are capable of experiencing their lives positively, despite the negative aspects of reconciling occupational participation to local constraints and opportunities.

I contend that, contrary to research on other types of occupational transitions, the school dropouts in Lavender Hill do not experience this transition as significant in their lives and view themselves as ordinary men in this community. The consistent submission of their occupational participation over time reflects the overwhelming power of the context of Lavender Hill in shaping occupational outcomes. The opportunities that the school dropouts are presented with by chance, and their response to these in the form of sagacity or a proxy-sagacity, are only possible as a result of the contextual container in which these opportunities emerge. In relation to this, then, my curiosity brings me to consider whether the interplay and influence of the three core factors to which the occupational participation of the school dropouts submit are true for *all* men in Lavender Hill. Although this was not the focus of investigation for this study, I believe this to be worth noting. Previous arguments which question whether education as a singular construct does in fact enhance the life chances of those who receive it (Willis, 1977; Cosser & Sehlola, 2009) seem to suggest that this might be the case. However, since a definitive answer is not possible at this stage, this warrants further investigation.

In conclusion, the school dropouts in Lavender Hill lack choice and control in constructing their occupational participation and related occupational repertoires during the course of their lives. Their experience of occupational marginalisation is a

significant contributor to occupational injustice. Countering occupational marginalisation would require opportunities to enrich occupational participation early in their lives in order to shape their occupational trajectories differently. Further to this, assistance in negotiating opportunities for enriching occupational participation through the establishment of anchoring occupations is called for.

University of Cape Town

APPENDIX A

EXCERPTS FROM REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Excerpt 1

The research context is not a new one for me and is one that I have entered a number of times previously throughout the 5 years I have been working in Lavender Hill. Many of my assumptions about the context have been dismissed over the years. I do not feel unsafe in the community, although 'safety' is always a concern. I feel welcomed in the school context although feel that my "whiteness" stands out and often sets me apart from the experience of the people living in the community of Lavender Hill. I have to declare I am a privileged white South African who has reaped the benefits of an apartheid system that privileged white people. I have had access to a good education (primary, secondary and tertiary) and my basic human rights have always been met. From an occupational perspective I have had access to all the spoils and choices of participation over the years and I have been encouraged to participate whole-heartedly in all of those occupations that I may have wanted to. Having declared my own privilege I also wish to acknowledge, however, that my life has never been one of opulence. I originate from a family where both my parents are educators (which I guess is where my value of education might originate from) and who do not earn great amounts of money. I remember distinctly the feeling that I had on first arriving on Upper Campus in 1999 and realising that I was "way out of my league" in terms of the economic brackets from which the large majority of students originated.

Excerpt 2

...I began a number of years ago to deconstruct this thinking [*about racial classification and its implications*] but I always wonder about what assumptions have been left unchecked – those that I am not aware of. How has my thinking of how the world works for black and coloured people today been shaped by my past childhood experiences?...

...In so many ways I am as different as I can be from my participants. I am a white, middle-class woman who not only completed school but who is now fortunate enough to be doing a post-graduate degree (which is the purpose of this research). My participants are coloured, working class men who did not complete school. The only

small resemblance I have with them is regarding the stage of life I find myself in which fits with the age bracket that I outlined in my selection criteria... ..The truth is for the purposes of this research I do worry about being able to identify with the life experiences that my participants share with me and being able to understand and access this experience so that it opens my eyes “afresh” to their experience. In many ways I guess that I have to picture myself as a blank slate – similar to the way I experienced learning about coloured and black people as a child – and to absorb the information that my participants share with me during the interviews...

Excerpt 3

...I wish to continue an exploration of my own identities as they might relate to my participants’ identities in terms of situating each of us in a specific social position. This process will assist me in making apparent the diversities in social positions. The table illustrates these positions.

	Age	Gender	Sexuality	Race	Ethnicity	Religion	Class	Housing
Researcher	Young adult	woman	heterosexual	white	English-speaking South African	Christian	Middle class	Formal
Participants	Young adults Middle aged	Men	Heterosexual	Coloured	Afrikaans-speaking South African (Cape Malay) English-speaking South African	Christian Muslim Rastafarian Traditional	Lower/ Working class	Formal Informal

APPENDIX B

GENERIC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Where would you like to begin your story about leaving school?
- Waar wil jy begin met die storie van wanneer jy die skool gelos het?
- Tell me what happened before you decided to leave school
- Vertel vir my die storie van wat gebeur het voor jy die skool gelos het.
- What did you do straight after you left school?
- Wat het jy gedoen net na jy die skool gelos het?
- How has what you have done and been involved in changed over the years?
- Hoe het wat jy in die lewe doen verander oor die jare?
- If you had to represent what you have done and what you still do as the songs on the back of a CD cover what would the names of those songs be?
- As jy moet representeer wat jy gedoen het en wat jy nou dagliks doen as die songs wat op die agter kant van a CD is wat sou die name van daai songs wees?
- What might your story tell others about life after choosing to leave school?
- Wat sal jou storie vir ander mense vertel van die lewe na 'n mens die skool los?

APPENDIX C

ENGLISH INFORMATION SHEET



School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Faculty of Health Sciences

Divisions of Communications Sciences and Disorders,
Nursing and Midwifery, Occupational Therapy,
Physiotherapy

F45 Old Main Building, Groote Schuur Hospital,

My name is Liesl Peters and I am a student at the University of Cape Town. I am doing research as part of the Masters in Occupational Therapy degree.

The title of this research study is "A biographical inquiry into the occupational engagement of men in Lavender Hill who have dropped out of school." This study is important because it will help people to understand what it is like for men who have chosen to leave school.

It is up to you whether or not you want to be part of this study and no one can force you to do so. If you choose to be part of the study you will be required to give your consent. This means that you understand what is required of you and that you give your permission for the information you provide to be used. You can choose to leave the study at any time with no negative consequences.

In order to be a part of this study you will need to attend 4 – 5 one hour interview sessions where you will share the story of your life and what you have done since dropping out of school. The venue for the interview will be decided together with you. All of the interviews will be audio-taped. Once the interview has been completed and written up you will have an opportunity to have a look at it or have it read to you. You can then make any changes you would like to.

Your name will not be used in any reporting of the research unless you would like your real name included. Anything you tell the researcher in the interviews will not be told to anyone else.

There are no risks linked to being a part of this study. You will not receive anything for being a part of the study. Some people who have been part of this kind of research have found that it was a good experience to share their story with another person.

Any questions that you have will be answered by the researcher in person or via telephone. The researcher can be contacted on (021) 406 6404.

The researcher will be supervised by Roshan Galvaan, a senior lecturer at the University of Cape Town. If you have any questions for her you can contact her on (021) 406 6042.

This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) and its reference number is 343/2009. Professor Marc Blockman is Chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee and he can be contacted on (021) 406 6492 if you would like more information on the approval of this research.

If you agree to participate in this study please fill in the form on the following page.

APPENDIX D
ENGLISH CONSENT FORM



School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Faculty of Health Sciences

Divisions of Communications Sciences and Disorders,
Nursing and Midwifery, Occupational Therapy,
Physiotherapy

F45 Old Main Building, Groote Schuur Hospital,

I agree to participate in the research study "A biographical inquiry into the occupational engagement of men in Lavender Hill who have dropped out of school."

I understand what is required of me and that I have the right to leave the study at any stage. I have had the study explained to me and I have read or been read the previous information page. I understand that my name will not be used in any reporting of the research unless I choose to have it included. I have had the chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I understand that I will not receive anything for participating in the study.


Name in Print: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E

AFRIKAANS INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

	<p>School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences</p> <p>Faculty of Health Sciences</p> <p>Divisions of Communications Sciences and Disorders, Nursing and Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy</p> <p>F45 Old Main Building, Groote Schuur Hospital,</p>
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My naam is Liesl Peters en ek is 'n student van die Universiteit van Kaapstad. Ek is besig met navorsing as deel van my Meesters Graad in Arbeidsterapie. Die studie se fokus is om te verstaan wat mans in Lavender Hill gedoen het na hulle besluit het om nie skool te voltooi nie.

Deelname aan die studie is vrywillig en daar sal verwag word van u om volle toestemming te gee aan die navorser. Dit sal beteken dat die inligting dat u met die navorser gedeel het kan in die studie gebruik word. U kan op enige stadium kies om jouself te verwyder van die studie. Die keuse om nie meer deel te neem nit sal geen negatiewe gevolge dra nie.

As u kies om deel te neem aan die studie sal daar van u verwag word om 4 – 5 een uur lange onderhoude by te woon oor vier maande. Daar sal u jou lewensverhaal met die navorser deel en wat u gedoen het na u nie skool voltooi het nie. Die onderhoude sal plaasvind op 'n ooreenstemmende plek. Die aanvanklike onderhoud sal op kasette opgeneem word en u sal die kans hê om die geskrewe kopie van die onderhoud deur te gaan met die navorser. Die navorser sal die storie wat u vertel het terug na u lees as u wil dit hê. U sal die kans kry om dit te verander sal u graag wou.

U naam sal nie in die studie genoem word, tensy u dit verkies. Die navorser sal deur die verloop van die studie die deelnemers se identiteit beskerm. Naame en inligting sal onder geen omstandighede met mense wat nie by studie betrokke is gedeel word. Daar is geen risiko's verborge aan die deelname van die studie nie. U sal niks kry vir u

deelneem in die studie, maar mense wat in hierdie soort navorsing voor deelgeneem het, het gevind dat dit 'n goeie ondervinding vir hulle was om hulle stories met anders te deel.

Enige vrae wat u het sal beantwoord word deur die navorser gedurende die ontmoetings. U kan ook die navorser kontak by (021) 406 6406 as u wil. Roshan Galvaan is 'n senior lecturer by die Universiteit van Kaapstad and sy het toesig oor die navorser. Sy kan gekontak word by (021) 406 6042.

Hierdie navorsing is goedgekeur by die Research Ethics Committee (REC) en die aanwysingsnommer is 343/2009. Professor Marc Blockman is die hoof van die Research Ethics Committee. Hy kan gekontak word by (021) 406 6492 as u enige vrae vir hom het.

As u ooreenstem om deel te neem aan die studie, vul asseblief die volgende vorm in.



School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Faculty of Health Sciences

Divisions of Communications Sciences and
Disorders, Nursing and Midwifery, Occupational
Therapy, Physiotherapy

F45 Old Main Building. Groote Schuur Hospital.

Ek stem in om deel te neem aan die navorsing studie “Die arbeidsdeelname vir mans in Lavender Hill wat nie skool voltooi het nie.”

Ek verstaan wat van my verwag word in die deelname van hierdie studie. Ek verneem dat ek die aangehegte dokument gelees het en dit ook verstaan en dat die navorsers alles vir my verduidelik het. Ek het die kans gekry het om vrae te vra en om antwoorde te kry. Ek verstaan dat naame en inligting sal onder geen omstandighede met mense wat nie by studie betrokke is gedeel word. Ek verstaan dat ek sal niks kry vir my deelneem in die studie.

Vol naam en van: _____

Handtekening: _____

Datum: _____

APPENDIX F

SUPPORTING QUOTES FOR CATEGORY 1

1.	<p><i>Clino: "...maar som tye as die geld nou nie reg is nie en dan, soos jy ko by jou vriend, jou vriend doenie selle job wat jy doen en dan vra jy nou vir hom hoeveel kry hy, dan sê hy nou vir jou hy kry R150 a dag en jy kry maar R90 a dag en dan so het ek daai gelos dan gaan ek na iemand anders toe dan vra ek nou weer of hulle nie werk het vir my nie en dan sê hulle ok, painting miskien weer. Dan kom ek daar, dan vinne ek uit maar die ou betaal ook konder die belt en dan los weer, of ek vinne uit die mense se, die manier wat die mense die mense employ by it issie goed nie want hulle, hoe kan ek sê, hulle mistreat mense, dan los ek daai job."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "...but some times when the money isn't right then, you come by your friends and they are doing the same job as you and you ask them how much do you get, then they say R150 per day and you are getting only R90 per day and so I left that job and went to some others and asked if they had work for me, perhaps painting. Then when I go there I find out that that guy also pays under the belt and then I leave that again, or I find out that the manner in which this person employs people isn't good because, how can I say, they mistreat people, then I leave that job."</i></p>
2.	<p><i>Clino: "My first job was carpentry I think, ja and then after that I did this brick-laying, but I was the 'boy' I use to mix the daga, the cement, and after that I went back to carpentry and then I did painting, I did plumbing. But, the BMD was just after the third job I think..."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "...where did I work that time? By [Bruce's Engineering]. Right, after working for [Mr Alie], I worked for the Door Store, again for [Mr Alie] and I got a job by another friend of mine. [By Bruce's Engineering]... ...I worked there, I think about 5 years and I left... ...I was at home for about, I think half a year. Then I got a job with my brother for [False Bay Timbers].</i></p>

APPENDIX G

SUPPORTING QUOTES FOR CATEGORY 2

1.	<p><i>Clino: "He called me one side, my father's brother, and he asked me don't I wanna go back to school, because he's gonna give me my school fees? He's going to pay for my tracksuit, any school of my choosing, I must just tell my mommy and my mommy must phone them, they can sort it out and then, but I must go back to school, because if I don't go back to school, he's going to give me a beating of a lifetime! So I said, ok, fine!"</i></p>
2.	<p><i>Clino: "...ek het nou die kwaai vriende wat, hulle care nie wie jy is of wat jy doen nie of wat jou job issie, hulle doen hulle eie ding. So I had to do the same because I had to fit in there."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "...I had cool friends then that, they didn't care who you are or what you did or what your job is, they do their own thing. So I had to do the same because I had to fit in there."</i></p>
3.	<p><i>Clino: "...toe sê my Ma daai's waar jy verkeerd is, because jy kannie a way maak vir iemand anders as jou huis al klaar nie hettie. Jy moet eerste ko kyk in jou huis... ...toe sê my Ma, het jy vergeet jy't twee kinders in die huis in, maar jy haloop vir ander mense maar jy ko eerste huistoe om te ko kykie, hier was ookie kraggie."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "...then my mom said that's where you are wrong, because you can't make a way for others when your own house doesn't have. You must first come and look in your own house... ...then my mom said, did you forget that you have two children in the house, but you run around after other people but you don't come home first to look, here there was also no money."</i></p>
4.	<p><i>Ralphi: "As hulle die rapport oopgemaak het dan sien hulle, oh no! jou punte, nou kyk hulle by die syver by die dae wat jy nou in die skool gewees het, die dae wat jy afwesig is. Daai is die enigste tyd wat hulle nou eintlik uitvind hoeveel dae jy nie in die skool gewees het nie. Maar hell, os het daarem pak gekry."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "When they opened the report then they saw, oh no! your marks, then they look at the column at the days when you weren't in school, the days that you were absent. That is the only time when they found out how many days you weren't in</i></p>

	<i>school. But, hell, we got a hiding."</i>
5.	<p><i>Gavin: "...my ouma was baie liefgewees vir my en sy't alles gedoen om my te beskerm alhoewel daar groot armoed was. En sy moes maar altyd gewerk het, losse werkies gedoen het. Met die swaarkry het hulle alles gedoen in hulle vermoë om vir my op die skool te kry."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "...my ouma loved me a lot and she did everything she could to protect me even though there was a lot of poverty. And she always had to work, she did temporary work. With the difficulties they did everything in their power to get me in school."</i></p>
6.	<p><i>Gavin: "...ek glo as ek die korrekte bystand gehad het in my skool loopbaan, dan kon ek vër gegaan het, vir daai voorliefde wat ek gehad het vir die kort tydjie op die skool."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "...I believe that if I had the correct guidance during my school career then I would have gone far, because I enjoyed school for the short time I was there."</i></p>
7.	<p><i>Ralphi: "Was mostly vir os amper soos 'n luxury house gewees... ..Jy kom soos jy wil, gaan soos jy wil... ..os smaak nie miskien vandag vir skool nie, in die oggend dink jou mense jy's oppad skooltoe want jy't jou skoolklere aan, jou rugsak weggesteek onder jou kooi, right, jy's nou oppad skooltoe... ..maar jy's nie oppad skooltoe nie. Oppie einde vannie dag is almal innie mall in, sit innie bioscope in!"</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "It was mostly for us like a luxury house... ..you come when you want, leave when you want... ..we didn't feel like being at school today, in the morning your parents thing you are on the way to school because you have your school clothes on, your back is stashed under the bed, right, you now on the way to school... ..but you not on the way to school. At the end of the day everyone is in the mall, sitting in the bioscope!"</i></p>
8.	<p><i>Gavin: "Maar omdat daar nooit 'n sterk hand was wat my in daai jong stadium van my lewe begelei het nie, het ek gemeen dat die besluite wat ek moet gemaak het in my jong tyd, wat ek daardie tyd gedink het dis korrekte besluite."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "But because ther wasn't a strong hand that led me during the time of my life when I was young, I thought that that was the correct decision at the time."</i></p>

9.	<p><i>Gavin: "Is asof as jong seun, you know, ek was oorgelaat aan my eie lot."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "It was as if as a young boy, you know, I was left with my own lot."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "En toe hy [his father] gekom het en toe sê hy well it is my decision en wat ever gebeur agter daai, ek moetie vir hulle responsible hou vir wat gebeur nie, want, hoe kan ek sê, ek is to be blame vir wat ever gebeur na daai... .. ek was in charge van my eie future..."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "And when he [my father] came and he said well it is my decision and what ever happens afterwards, I musn't hold them responsible, because, how can I say, I will be to blame for what ever happens after... ..I was in charge of my own future..."</i></p>
10.	<p><i>Ralphi: "Hulle't vir os mos gepromote en toe slaag ek ook mos. Ek het mos nou toe fail ek met die promotion toe wat hull nou vir os gepromote het van standerd 6 na standerd 7 toe. Toe't os basically nie geweet wat gat aan in standerd 7 nie, toe fail ek... ..en standerd 8 kan ek nie gemaster het nie, ek weetie hoekom nie, ek was seker maar net oppie verkere plek oppie verkere tye."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "They promoted us and I also failed. I failed with the promotion that they promoted us from standard 6 to standard 7. So then we basically didn't know what was going on in standard 7, then I failed... ..and I couldn't master standard 8, I don't know why, I was certainly at the wrong place at the wrong time."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "So, it's, how can I say now, I saw it in other people also this, how many times must you tell your mommy you can't do it, it's like the same with the teacher also. How many times must you tell them . . . hoeveel keer moet jy vir hom sê jy kan dit nie doen nie voor hulle gat realize dat daar's a problem?"</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "So, it's, how can I say now, I saw it in other people also this, how many times must you tell your mommy you can't do it, it's like the same with the other teacher also. How many times must you tell them... how many times must you say to them that you can't do it before they realise that there's a problem?"</i></p>

11.	<p><i>Gavin: "Toe die eerste Sondag môre toe ek die kerk gaan besoek deur uitnodiging van die broer, sy naam is [Johnnie Jillespie], deur wyse van uitnodiging om te kom kuier het ek dit baie aangenaam gevind..."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "The first Sunday morning when I visited the church by an invitation of the brother, his name is [Johnnie Jillespie] by being shown an invitation to come and visit I found it very pleasant..."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "Actually before I realised it happened, Miss [Fiela Adams], I didn't knew she was busy trying to get a contract for me at school, 3-month contract. So these guys [the contractors], they came again, I ask them where's my pay, and I was helping them, I was still on the roof. She called me, she said I forgot to tell you yesterday that you did get a contract! Wow!"</i></p>
12.	<p><i>Ralphi: "...staan hy [a gangster] met 'n vraggie mense, hy sal nou remarks gooi, hy sal nou sê jy jou die jou daai, maar hy sal nie tot by my kom nie! Want die clique wat saam met hom staan, meeste van hulle kinders gaan hier skool, nou hulle sal vir hom nou miskien rectify op hy manier, op hulle taal, hulle taal gebruik wat hulle nou het en dan sal it nou môre weer kom en daai selfde man wat my uitgevloek het hy sal vir my groet en is amazing jy sal nie nog dink daaraan nie maar is alles klein dingetjies maar oppie einde vannie dag sê jy vir jou self ook die gangsters, hulle respek my nogal! Hoekom? Vra jouself daai vraag? Ek is by die skool, governing body, ek gaan mos nou nie sien dat my community onder die grond in gaan nie..."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "...he stands [a gangster] with a group of people, he will throw remarks, he will now say you this and you that, but he won't come to me!" Because the clique that is standing with him, most of their children go to school here, and they will correct him regarding his manner, on their language, their language that they just used and then the next morning that same man who swore at me he will greet me and its amazing he won't think about it again but its all those small things that at the end of the day you say to yourself, the gangsters too, they respect me as well! Why? Ask yourself that question. I am at the school, on the governing body, I am going to see that my community does not go under the ground..."</i></p>
13.	<p><i>Ralphi: "My first wages, the end of the month, I think I paid over R2000 and, wow, I was proud! First thing I had to do, I had to cover</i></p>

	<p><i>my son's school fees..."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "n Man se priorities is, hy moet werk, hy moet die sole provider is, die eerst ding wat hy moet sorg voor is dat sy rent, sy letric, sy water, moet gecover wees. Hy moet sorg dat daar kos innie huis is, sy rules wat hy moet neerlê..."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "A man's priorities are he must work, he must be the sole provider, the first thing he must make sure is that his rent, his electricity, his water is covered. He must ensure that there is food in the house, there are rules that he must lay down..."</i></p>
14.	<p><i>Gavin: "...het die baas vir my ingeroep en gesê maar jy kan nie so aangaan nie, jy moet kies waar jy wil wees. En omdat ek geweet het waar my priorities lê, met my liefde en my passie vir die werk van God, gemeenskap pastoral, was dit nie vir my swaar om daai besluit te neem."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "...the boss called me in and said you can't go on like this, you must choose where you want to be. And because I knew where my priorities lay, with my love and passion for the work of God, community pastoral care, it wasn't a difficult decision for me to make."</i></p>
15.	<p><i>Gavin: "...en gesien het my bediening wat ek lewer in die gemeenskap, in die kerk, dat die Here het 'n roeping op my geplaas."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "...and he saw the service that I gave in the community, in the church, that God had placed a calling on me."</i></p>
16.	<p><i>Ralphi: "En kyk daarnou ek is nou oppie governing body ook, en wat 'n bietjie tight is want hoekom ek verstaan mos hoe my community werk man. Die mense wat, soos die mense wat oppie governing body is, hulle verstaan ook hoe die mense se koppe werk in Lavender Hill in, hoe jy die situasies moet kan uitsort."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "And look now I am now on the governing body too, and I'm tight with them because I understand how my community works. The people that, like the people who are on the governing body, they also understand how the people's heads in Lavender Hill work, how you can sort out the situations."</i></p>
17.	<p><i>Ralphi: "I'm here since that time, and this people is almost like family to me."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "...dit was meer die warmte en die liefde wat ek gesoek het wat</i></p>

	<p><i>ek hier by die klein groupie mense gekry het. En vanaf daardie tyd tot op na vandag, 2009, is ek nog steeds getrou aan die [Christian Centre Church], waar ek ook vandag die pastoor is, heidiglik."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "...it was more the warmth and the love that I looked for that I found with this small group of people. And from that time until today, 2009, I am still faithful to the [Christian Centre Church], where I am also the pastor today."</i></p>
18.	<p><i>Ralphi: "Maar ek het nogal, ek is tevrede wat ek nou is vandag. Ek dink nie eintlik ek short iets in die lewe nie want hoekom die mense wat ek saam meen werk, hulle lat jou at home voel man."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "But I also, I am satisfied with where I am today. I don't think I am really short of anything in my life because the people that I work with, they make me feel at home."</i></p>
19.	<p><i>Clino: "...ek is al amper 30 al en ek het nog niks gedoen met my lewe nie... ...Toe raak ek so frustrated..."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "...I am nearly 30 already and I haven't done anything with my life... ...I am getting so frustrated..."</i></p>
20.	<p><i>Clino: "Maar mens moet seker papiere het om . . . wanneer gat a mens nou a kans kry om papiere. . .So daai is maar nog iets wat os maar moet laat los, os kan net backdoor computers regmaak, so."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "But a person must surely have qualifications... ...when will a person get a chance to get qualifications. . .So that is something that we might as well leave, we can only fix backdoor computers."</i></p>
21.	<p><i>Clino: "...hy gaan voorentoe, nie actually voorentoe saam met die company nie, maar hou ook net vir hom daar because hy doen, a coloured word mos maar nou net gebruik om die vuil werk te doen, daai's al."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "...he goes forward, not actually forward with the company, he is held just there because he does, a coloured is just used to do the dirty work, that's all."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "...os is die tennisball man. Hier's die tennis court, right ok is nou so te sê, die tennis court is die Indians, die Indians met die net by, hy kry mos nog altyd meerder as ons. Hy besit die grond en die net – die witman en die swartman, hulle't man man 'n racket, os is maar die ball wat moet geslat word hier toe soontoe, of eintlik is os die net</i></p>

	<p><i>ook, jy bly maar net daar, jy kyk maar net of die ball soontoe gaan of soontoe gaan."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "...we are the tennisball. Here is the tennis court, right ok so now we say on the tennis court are the Indians, the Indians are the net, they always get more than us. They are the ground and the net – the white man and the black man they have man, man a racket, we are just the ball that must get hit from here til there, but sometimes we are just the net as well, you stay just there, you just look if the ball goes this way or that way."</i></p>
22.	<p><i>Clino: "En toe daai middag en toe sê hy [his employer], hy't gesê ek moet 5 o'clock uit sy yard wees en toe dink ok, ek is mos nou klaar, it was half pass 4 al klaar al dink ek, en toe quarter to 5 toe loop ek, van ek varrit so daar's mos nou niks om te doenie, hoekom moet ek dan nou net sit vir 15 minute. Toe die next dag wat ek terug ko, toe's die oggend, toe sê hy vir my ek is untrustworthy en al daai, hy kannie vir my weer employ nie. Toe dink ek ag, go to hell man! Wat soorte maniere is daai, because ek kannie eers toilet toe gaan nie, because hy allow nie vir jou om sy toilet te gebruik innie huis nie.</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "And on that afternoon he [his employer] said I must be out of his yard at 5 o'clock and I thought ok I am nearly finished, it was half past four all finished and I thought, when quarter to five came round, there's nothing left to do, why must I just sit there for fifteen minutes. The next day when I came back in the morning, he said to me I am trustworthy and all that, he can't employ me anymore. Then I thought go to hell man! What sort of manner is that because I can't even go to the toilet, because he doesn't even allow you to use his toilet in the house."</i></p>
23.	<p><i>Ralphi: "I've worked about 3–4 weeks with the contractors, but never were paid up till today. They blindfolded me, they stole my money, ok my sweat, they stole it."</i></p>
24.	<p><i>Ralphi: "...hulle't 'n college daar gehet vir die safety courses. Destyds toe wil ek mos nou, ek is baie lief vir die see, toe wil ek mos nou met die, die longliners, saam met hulle, shipping liners wil ek mos nou daar gaan werk het. Geskrywe, tot vandag toe nog nooit my results gekry nie, was 'n hele scam gewees."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "...they had a college there for safety courses. Those days I wanted to, I loved the sea, and so I wanted to work with the shipping liners, with them. I wrote, until today I haven't got my results, it was a whole scam."</i></p>

25.	<p><i>Gavin: "Hy was ok want ek het as dit ware vir hom gehelp om sy besigheidjies te doen en werkies gedoen daar, so vir hom was ek as dit ware 'n aanwins..."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "He was ok because I really helped him to do his business and his work, so for him I was truly an asset..."</i></p>
26.	<p><i>Clino: "...then that lady, my mommy's friend she said she's working there, she's a cleaner by [Needles], I must give my CV to her."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "...ek praat mos nou van my oom [name of uncle] en hy sê ek moet wegkom van die fabriek af want daar's 'n moontlikheid dat ek saam met hom kan gaan met die plumbing."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "...I am taling about my uncle [name of uncle] and he said I must leave the factory because there's a possibility that I can go and work with him as a plumber."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "After him I went to go work for a friend of my father, for [Owen], [Mr Owen]."</i></p>
27.	<p><i>Ralphi: "There was 2 jobs [that I looked for]... ... All my jobs was a handout, basically."</i></p>

APPENDIX H

SUPPORTING QUOTES FOR CATEGORY 3

1.	<p><i>Ralphi: "Hy't vir ons kom ontmoet by Kalkbay se harbour, toe sien hy dat ons nou wel aangaan, goed aangaan met die visgevangery. Hy't vir os gevra of os nie aan die klub wil behoort nie. Toe sê ek ja..."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "He met us at Kalkbay harbour, he saw that we were getting on well, getting on well with the fishing. He asked us if we didn't want to be a part of the club. I said yes..."</i></p>
2.	<p><i>Ralphi: "Is jou stokperdjie, jy stel meerder belang in jou stokperdjie as enige ander ding wat die huis... ..Maar daai is eintlik nou jou vrye tyd, goeie tyd waar jy nou rustig kan is, wat jy nou kan dink, jou planne wat jy nou gat, wat voorlê en hoe jou planne nou gat uitwerk miskien nou vir die week of so."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "It's your hobby, you enjoy your hobby more than anything else in the house... ..because that is your free time, good time where you can relax, where you can think, what plans you are going to take, what lies ahead and what plans you are possibly going to make for the week or so."</i></p>
3.	<p><i>Ralphi: "Ons het dit net out of the blou . . ."</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "We came to it out of the blue..."</i></p>
4.	<p><i>Ralphi: "'n Vriend van my broer het daar gekom... ..Hy't my net, ek dink it was op 'n Vrydag of 'n Donderdag, het hy my gesê lat hulle vat mense aan by Simons Town Docks, het ek 'n ID? Ek sê ja, ek het 'n ID, ek vra hoe laat moet ek daar wees?"</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "A friend of my brother's came there... ..He, I think it was on a Friday or a Thursday, he told me that they are taking people on the Simons Town Docks, do I have an ID? I said yes, I have an ID, what time must I be there?"</i></p>
5.	<p><i>Ralphi: "...one afternoon my eldest son came home, he did attend school here by [Olivia Primary]. Came home, said his teacher want to see me. I ask him why? The teacher wanted to know whose father's at home. He said, my father! He was standing in the room, ok the</i></p>

	<p><i>next day I came here, I ask what's the problem? She ask me, can you put windows in? I said yes, ok, I did put about 10 to 15 windows in."</i></p>
6.	<p><i>Clino: "...daai ou ko verby met a Mercedes Benz, die wat is daai, die Compressor, daai nuwe Compressors! Ek vra, hy sê vir my, gee vir my almal daai pamphlets dan's jou werk klaar. Ek sê vir hom ek kannie daai doenie because die moment ek nou in daai office gaan dan gat hulle my weer pamphlets gee, dan moet ek weer hier ko staan. Daai ou sê vir my kyk hier, ek vra toe vir hom het meneer nie vir my betere werk daar nie? Hy sê vir my ek moet my particulars almal neerskrywe vir hom, ek skrywe dit toe neer, hy sê vir my hy gat my a phonecall gee."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "...that guy came by with a Mercedes Benz, what is that, the Compressor, those new Compressors! I asked, he said to me, give me all those pamphlets then your work is finished. I said to him I can't do that because the moment I go in to the office they will give me pamphlets again, then I must come and stand here again. That guy said to me, look here, I asked him doesn't Sir have better work for me? He said to me I must write all my particulars down for him, I wrote it down, he said he would give me a phonecall."</i></p>
7.	<p><i>Clino: "Ek sê toe vir hom [employer] it maakie saak wat [money] hy vir my gee nie maar solank ek werk, because ek wil werk, sê ek vir hom."</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "I said to him [employer] it doesn't matter what [money] he gives to me as long as I work, because I said to him I want to work."</i></p>
8.	<p><i>Clino: "So I asked him [his teacher], to go into this architectural thing, how many years must I study, so I think he said 5 or 6 years. So, just there and there I thought no I don't have 6 years of my life to go and then I must still waste . . . and I thought, say I go to go and study, I pay all that money and now things don't work out as I planned. I have to drop out then what happens to me then, I wasted a lot of money, I wasted years of my life."</i></p>
9.	<p><i>Clino: "...toe is ek die enigste persoon wat weet hoe om in die kitchen te werk, dye te mix, my masjiene te laai en die jets te doen!"</i></p> <p><i>Clino: "...and I am the only person that knew how to work in the kitchen, to mix the</i></p>

	<p><i>dye, to work my machines to to do the jets!"</i></p> <p><i>Ralphi: "The powders that he mixed with the stains and it's with this flux and methylated spirits and we used, wow, it's a lot of stuff that we used. But that old man he made us very clever..."</i></p>
10.	<p><i>Clino: "Say in our house ne... .. say you get your money today, tomorrow there's nothing left of your money! Because through the week or through the month you have to go, don't you have this to borrow me, so you have to pay the people back and then I thought maybe if I could go and work, help my daddy, then maybe the situation in the house would become better..."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "...toe ek finaal besluit ek gaan nie meer skool nie, ek wil nie meer skool gaan nie, was my argument, my seining punt, ek wil gaan werk om te help in die huis, om die huis optehou..."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "...when I made the final decision that I was not going to school anymore, that I didn't want to go to school anymore, my argument was, my selling point, that I want to go work to help in the house, to keep the house going..."</i></p>
11.	<p><i>Gavin: "Ja, by [name of place], hier in [name of place], hulle het Standerd 6 gedoen aandskool en omdat ek nou die nood begin te sien het, ek sal 'n bietjie moet geleertheid aan my kry en daai, het ek gegaan vir 'n tydjie aandskool. Maar ek het self dit ook nie klaargemaak nie. Ek het dit net begin en dit het heeltemal net weggefade want dit was toe net nadat ek by die fabriek beginte werk het..."</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: "Yes, at [name of place], here in [name of place] they did standard 6 at night school and because I began to see the need, I must get a bit more education so I went to night school but I also didn't finish that. I just started it and it totally faded away because it was just after I started work at the factory."</i></p>
12.	<p><i>Clino: "Ek het gegaan tot daar by daai werk, toe sien ek wie die baas is daar, a wit ou en ek het gepraat saam met daai ou, saam met [name of boss], baie lekker maniere gehet en toe het ek gaan apply vir a job daar. Toe sê hulle vir my [the manager] is baie besig in sy office in, coloureds. En toe sê ek ok is daar nieman anders wat ek meen kan praat? Toe sê hulle vir my ek moet praat met die</i></p>

	<p><i>manager. So kom die ou uit, coloured ou, [name of manager], hy vra vir my hoekom is ek daar, ek sê vir hom ek kom apply vir a job. Toe change daai ou se hele gesig soema. Ek dink, vir wat nou, toe sê hy net as enige iets opkom dan sal ek jou phone en al daai, maar so in a ander way. Ek dink, ok is oraaait ek gaan uit daar, klim in die trein, kom ek huistoe.”</i></p> <p><i>Clino: “I went to that work, I saw who the boss was, a white guy and I spoke with him, with [name of boss], he had a great manner and I decided to apply for a job there. But that time they said to me that [the manager] is very busy in his office, coloureds. And I said ok is there no one else I can speak to in the mean time? They said I must speak to the manager. So the guy comes out, coloured guy, [the manager], he asks me why I was there, I said to him that I came to apply for a job. Then that guy’s whole face changed. I thought, for what now, then he said to me only if something comes up then he will phone and all that, but in another sort of way. I thought, ok, its alright and went out, climbed in the train, went home.”</i></p>
13.	<p><i>Gavin: “...en daar vanaf 12 tot 15 jaar oud het ek al ’n vêr entjie pad geloop wat self-bederwing betref, maar wat ek kan sê is dat ek in tydstip het ek tot beseffing gekom as ek so aangaan soos ek aangegaan het, wat gaan van my word? Daai was my vraag gewees. Wat gaan van my word?... ...en dit het almal vrese by my ontstaan, soveel te meer dat ek realize het en beseef het dat ek sal moet stop maak of verandering moet bring.”</i></p> <p><i>Gavin: “...and between 12 and 15 years I walked a far path of self-destruction, but what I can say is that after a time I came to a decision that if I go on like I was going on, what will happen to me? That was my question. What will happen to me?... ...and that always stayed with me, so much that I realised and decided that I must stop and bring a change.”</i></p>
14.	<p><i>Clino: “...toe sê ek vir my Ma, Mammie hier’s nog R15 vir Mammie, kyk wat Mammie kan doen met it. Sonder lat ek erens anders gegaan het toe kom ek straight huistoe, klim ek in my kooi, toe gat slap ek. So ek sal maar eerste sorg vir my huis voor ek vir enige iemand anders sorg.”</i></p> <p><i>Clino: “...so I said to my mom, Mommy here is R15 for mommy, look what Mommy can do with it. Before I go anywhere else I came straight home, climbed into my bed, went to sleep. So I will care first for my own house before I will care for anyone else’s.”</i></p>

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